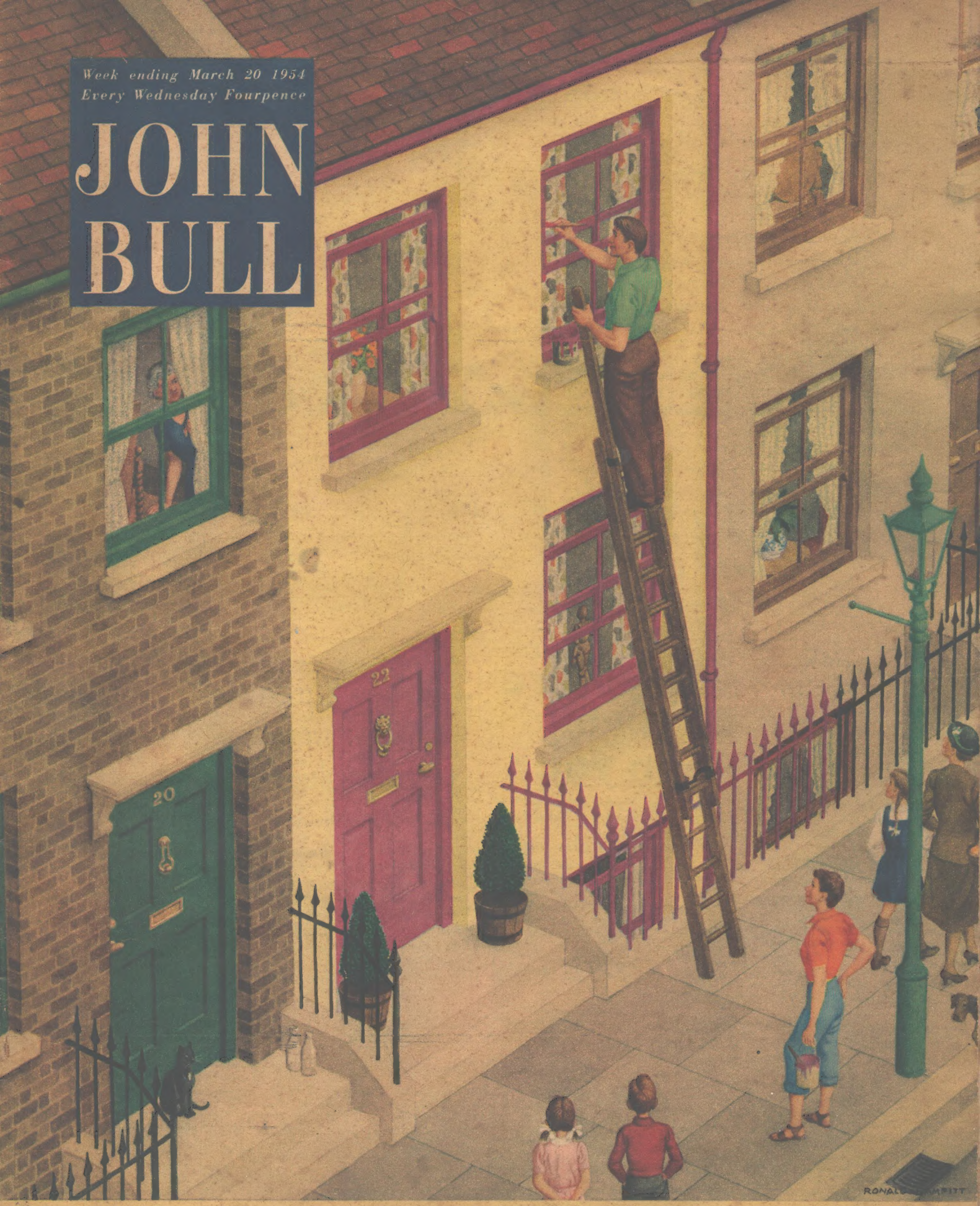
Week ending March 20 1954
Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL



IN THIS ISSUE: **H. E. BATES** • **HAMMOND INNES** • **VIC OLIVER**

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Electric cookers have thermostat control on the oven, quick-heating boiling plates, and new, variable switches which give perfect heat-control from fast boiling to slow simmering — *and lower*, if you want it!

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(Signed) D.A.B., London.

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If you are living on your nerves you are bound to be feeling the strain. Sleeping badly, not eating and no doubt feeling miserably depressed. But with the first dose or two of Phosferine the appetite improves. This leads to a strengthening of the nervous system, evident in better nights and a calmer, happier outlook. After this it is simply a question of time building up the ***extra*** vitality you need. Get a supply of Phosferine now.

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Silvikrin

HAIR DRESSING

(A Lotion with Oil)

2/6 a bottle—large economy size 4/4½

SHD-1

EDITORIAL

Fair test wanted

DURING the next fortnight, Mr. Ian Currey, Director of Education for Huntingdonshire, will receive a list of schoolchildren. It will place in order of success the thousand eleven-year-olds who have taken the Common Entrance Examination.

Until this year, Mr. Currey has put into his grammar schools the best of the top 250, regardless of their sex. But this year he has told the interviewing teachers: "Try to equalize the numbers." The reason is that during the last five years 542 girls got in, compared with 431 boys.

The new ruling has caused a local storm. The County Teachers' Association has protested at what it considers unfair discrimination against girls.

BUT Mr. Currey replies that previously it was the boys who were unfairly treated. "We must face the fact that girls are generally brighter than boys at eleven, but usually lose their mental lead later," he says. "Local authorities have a heart-breaking task. They know that the award of a grammar school place can make or mar a child's whole life, yet the forecast of which children are likely to benefit has to be made on inadequate data."

MR. IAN CURREY
"We have a heart-breaking task"

Every education authority is faced with the fact that the "Eleven-Plus" examination does not do the job it was supposed to do in picking the best candidates for grammar schools. Educationalists attack the entry examination on other grounds, too. They say that the "intelligence tests" which form a main part of it are frequently unfair to slower and more imaginative children.

"ALL they do is indicate present status. Their use for prediction over more than a limited period is disastrous," says the National Union of Teachers. Yet the sole purpose of the examination *is* to predict which children are most likely to benefit from higher education.

Hertfordshire has dropped the intelligence test. Instead, there is a test which shows what the children have already learned. Special attention is paid to what head-teachers say about their pupils. And two thousand out of the four thousand candidates are interviewed—a much higher proportion than in most other places.

IN Anglesey, the children are lucky. There are sufficient comprehensive schools in the island, and tests have been abolished altogether.

Elsewhere, until the building programme can catch up, some sort of test seems necessary. But let it be fair. The experience of Huntingdonshire confirms the fears of many parents that the present test is not.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

THIS sort of thing sends town planners and architects into a frenzy. To gain the best decorative effect and a pleasant street layout, they say, a terrace of houses should be treated as one building. Ronald Lampitt agrees that people should co-operate more. "But until they do," he says, "I'm all in favour of youngsters shocking the neighbours out of drab walls and their eternity of browns and greens." The colour of his own house? Bright blue.

I'LL WIPE— GLAD TO KEEP MY HANDS OUT OF WATER

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GN 228

I thought he was the man for the job . . .

UNTIL HE TURNED TO GO

What lost him this wonderful opportunity? What evidence of carelessness did he reveal when he turned to leave the room? It was something *he* knew nothing about, an unsightly dusting of dandruff on the back of his jacket. It may seem unfair but the signs of dandruff *do* let one down in the eyes of others. And it can all be so easily avoided . . . with the aid Dr. Page Barker's Scurf and Dandruff Lotion. The treatment was evolved many years ago but the demand for it continues to grow swiftly for one powerful reason . . . it is the most effective treatment of all! Ask for Dr. Page Barker's Scurf and Dandruff Lotion at your chemists or hairdressers. Only 3/2d. a bottle, large size 4/4d.

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FREE SPEECH

Tweeds were a sign of success

THERE was no porter to direct me when I called at a London office to be interviewed for a job. After nearly thirty years as an army officer, I was completely out of touch with business life, so I hesitated to trouble three smart young men in black who arrived with rolled umbrellas and Eden hats.

Then I saw an obvious underling, and asked him to take me to the staff manager's room. I was a little surprised by the staff manager—he wore green tweeds, a red shirt, and a yellow tie—but I got the post. I soon discovered that the young men with umbrellas were junior clerks, and that the fellow who helped me on my first visit was in charge of foreign sales. I realize now that I should have guessed that he mattered—he wore a sports coat and flannels, and sadly needed a haircut.—C. Y., Essex.

Phone Sense

AS an executive with a group of firms, I required my secretary to be with me all the time to take phone calls and notes. She sat opposite me on the other side of a large writing table, and we had the phone between us. She must have had telepathic powers, because sometimes she would not answer the phone. Instead, she would push it over to me, and say: "I think it is your wife." Invariably, she was right.—E., Derby.

Name And Age

IN my work I read the full Christian names of hundreds of people every month. I have been amused to notice how often a person's name dates him closely. It is not difficult to make a rough guess at the date of birth of George Mafeking Green, Gloria Swanson Adams, Raymond Ypres Smith, Ramsay Macdonald Robinson, Deanna Jones, Winston Thomas, and Philippa Elizabeth Menzies.—T. F., Gloucestershire.

Wrong Lines

MY nephew, aged eleven, was given some lines to do at home for not paying attention in class. The sentence he had to copy was: "I must pursue my erudite studies in this tutelary edifice with appropriate decorum."—MRS. A. GRIGGS, Cross Lane West, Gravesend, Kent.

Party Piece

I WAS on my way home one morning when I was approached by a group of men and women with a baby. One of the women asked me rather shyly if I would accept the child's "christening piece." I said that I would gladly accept it, and was handed a piece of cake. They were all obviously delighted. I was puzzled, but learned later that it is an old Scottish custom to offer the christening piece to the first person the christening party meets on its way to church. If the offering is accepted, it is thought that good luck is sure to follow the child throughout its life. — W. M. DUNCAN, Newport, Dundee.

If the baby is a girl, the piece is offered to the first man; if a boy, to the first woman. In the north of England, it was the custom to offer bread and cheese.

Awkward Case

I ONCE spent nearly a whole morning mixing and packing a special powder for a customer's prescription. It was a very unpleasant powder, and I had to weigh out each dose exactly and pack it into a gelatine casing so that the patient could swallow it without tasting anything. A week later she came back for more capsules. I asked her if she had felt better since taking them. Oh, yes," she replied, "but what a nuisance it is undoing those fiddly cases to get the powder out!" — MRS. T. TEDD, Heene Road, Enfield, Middlesex.

BEGINNING NEXT WEEK
THE LIFE STORY OF
DOUGLAS BADER
FULL DETAILS ON PAGE 14

State Of Mind

WE were constructing an army camp in Canada. My job was to install the sanitary and heating equipment. The building of the sanitary section was coming along too slowly and my work was being delayed, so I asked the American in charge to speed up a bit. This started an argument, and the American said: "I'm from Missouri." I replied: "And I'm from London, England—so what?" There was a laugh, and I was quietly told that "I'm from Missouri" is an Americanism which, used in an argument, means: "You've got to show me." — ARTHUR POVEY, Dashwood Road, Gravesend, Kent.

At a banquet in Philadelphia in 1899, Representative Willard Duncan Vandiver said: "I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."

Live Wire

I AM newly married, and the tenant of a very astute landlady ("Free Speech," February 27). By reading the electric meter for the whole house regularly, I have discovered that we and the couple in the flat below are not only paying the landlady's own electricity bill, but are giving her a margin of profit. She does not allow us to use any electrical appliances, not even our kettle.—K., Cardiff.

. . . Three years ago an acquaintance let her house fully furnished for eighteen months to a family which included three young boys. She charged £1 a week. On her return from abroad, she found the furniture and furnishings in perfect condition, and the larder fully stocked. This landlady has now gone abroad again, and let her house for £1 5s.—MISS NOELLE BARKER, Portsmouth.

The Example

MY wife used to complain because I am not a handyman. Now a man has come to live in the semi-detached house next door who can do everything — joinery, building, painting, decorating. He is the kind of handyman wives dream about, and he is driving his wife to distraction. Most evenings and every weekend he is busy hammering and sawing, and using electric drills and other appliances which upset the radio and TV. I have been vindicated completely. As our neighbour bangs away merrily, my wife says: "Thank heaven that you are not a handyman."—J. D., Peterborough.

Trial And Error

AS the retired branch manager of a shoeshop, I know that many shoe-saleswomen (JOHN BULL cover painting, February 27) are heroines. Once a customer spent nearly two hours trying on thirty-eight pairs of shoes, and then decided on a pair at 38s. 6d. Two days later she came back to change them, tried on many more and finally selected the first pair she had seen on her first visit. — A. DODSWORTH, Bridlington Avenue, Salford.

Monkey Business

WHILE I was on holiday on a farm near the Wankie Game Reserve, about 150 miles north of Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, a baboon hunt was organized (JOHN BULL, March 6). It took place at night; we were equipped with rifles and lamps which we wore fixed to the head. Our total bag was one baby baboon and its mother, and although these animals are classed as vermin, I was quite sickened by their almost human screeches. I felt sorry for them—until a baboon killed one of our dogs in a thicket.—G. E. R., Ipswich, Suffolk.

. . . I heard of a young woman who ran screaming from the bush when a baboon attacked her while she was getting a picnic hamper from her car. Notices on the Cape Peninsula, South Africa, say: Warning. Please do not feed the baboons. Do not annoy them and do not play with them.—P. GUNNS, Wallington, Surrey.

. . . A pack of wild monkeys descended on our block at R.A.F. Station Changi, on Singapore Island. They were quite friendly, but

cautious. A friend took this photograph as a young monkey snatched a biscuit from my hand. — J. W. ANDREWS, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed, and at usual rates for readers' photographs. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

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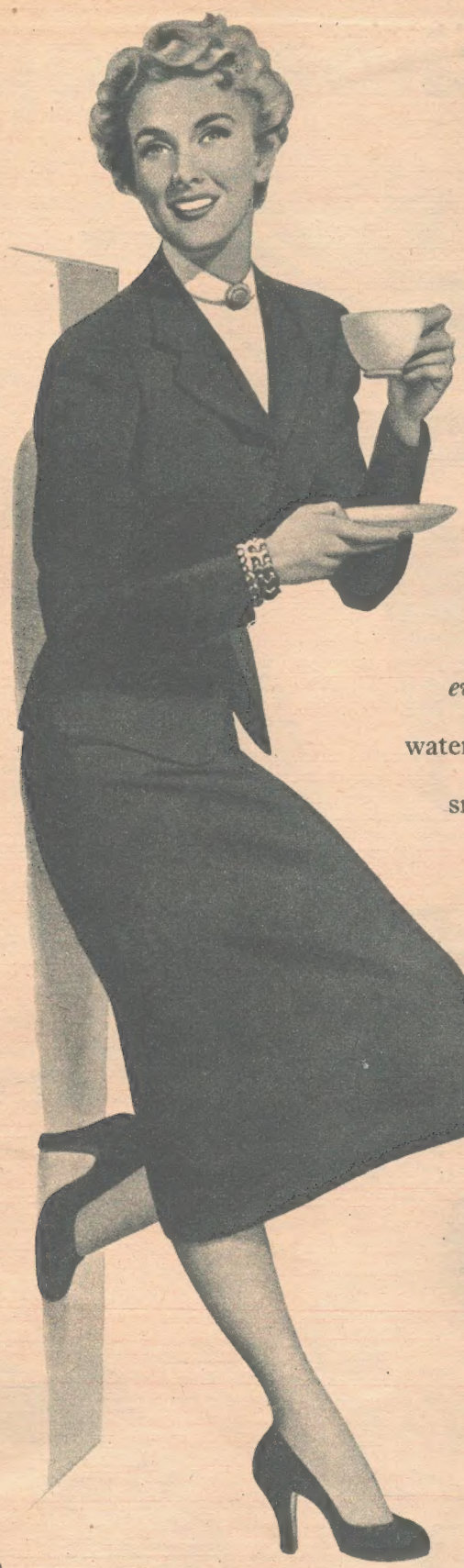

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for grand coffee quickly

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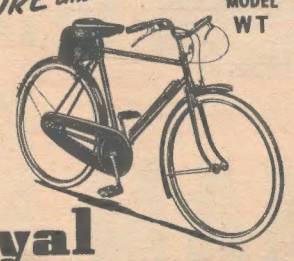

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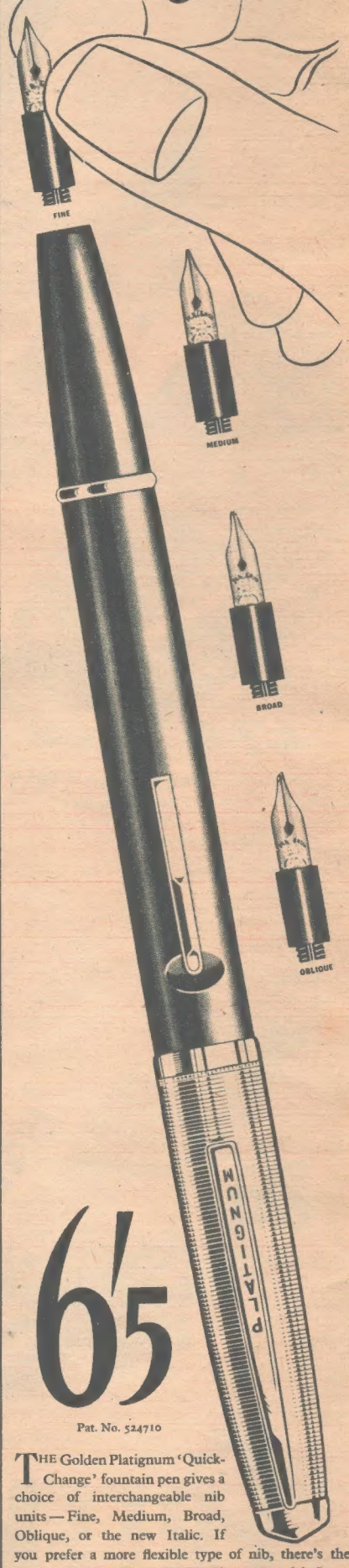

6/5

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GG

His life belonged to the two women. It always had, always would. He was just . . .

A man in the house

by H. E. BATES

THE TWO SISTERS, Miss Constance and Miss Jackie, lived alone with their manservant Spratchley. Sometimes it did not seem possible that this natural and simple arrangement had gone on for more than thirty years.

The house, of a kind of gimcrack baronial Tudor, constructed of false beams darkened with creosote, was set in the lower slopes of a hillside from which there had once been a view across a flat wide valley. But Miss Jackie, the younger, who was fond of shortening some of her words and so spoke of a "pash for trees," had planted many poplars and fast-growing cypresses along the boundaries of the garden, gradually shutting out the circle of the world. Gradually, too, neither she nor her sister missed what they had seen there.

In summertime, coverts of hazel and hornbeam along the hillside thickened into an unbroken wall of leaf. In winter, a thin white soil of chalk seemed to give off a continuous dirty smoke of travellers' joy. There seemed nothing much else to bother about, and the two sisters grew content, and then old, in their life with Spratchley.

"Spratchley will see to it," they said. "Leave it to Spratchley."

In habit and appearance, as sisters so often are, they were very different from each other: Miss Jackie was small and vigorous and nervously wiry, with a brown dry skin. In her "pash" for trees and her "pash" for flowers she was restless, and could not stay in bed after she had woken.

She liked to be out early, on unsullied mornings, pushing wheelbarrows, labouring among what she called her "delphs" or her "gladdies" or her "pollies" or her "rhodies," whistling in the pure air. She wore trousers of bleached khaki gaberdine that hid her stocky legs, and a brown pork-pie trilby that concealed most of her short grey hair.

Miss Constance, older by seven or eight

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY SEABRIGHT

The nurse gave a shout and Miss Constance stopped abruptly, grasping the banister. For a moment she stood goggling, like a drugged cockatoo

"I'm going to change the path," Miss Jackie announced. Obediently, Spratchley waited for his orders

years, had the plumpness of an irate goose that does not care to be disturbed. Her day did not begin until ten o'clock, when Spratchley brought breakfast to her bedroom on a tray.

When she sat up in bed, Spratchley came forward, coughing in gentle asthmatical politeness, with a pink woollen wrap for her shoulders. He held it while she tied its ribbons about her neck. Then he brought her oval ebony mirror, with her ebony brush and comb, and held the mirror steadily in front of her face while she brushed and combed her hair—hair that was like a crest of grey-white goose-feathers, ruffled at first with the irritation of sleep, then smoothed and humanized and softened as she brushed it down.

Spratchley knew better than to speak while she did these things, but sometimes, involuntarily, he coughed again. The flabby creases of her neck hung down like those of an old dog and her lips sagged loosely as if in the interrupted act of sharply drawing breath.

Then Spratchley took away the brush and comb and replaced them with her powder and her lipstick. After she had used them, dusting herself with a huge swansdown powder-puff, her face wore a mask of pale grey-mauve pollen and her lips were a short oval of crimson carefully scalloped so that the upper lip looked firm.

Then she would say: "It's chilly, Spratchley. What is that row Jackie is making? Shut the window. I didn't sleep a wink." And Spratchley would close the windows and sometimes, if she asked for it, even draw the curtains against the strong mid-morning sun.

"Now what have you got for me?" she snapped with a commanding expectation, as if she suspected for a moment that he had brought her anything other than an orange, her Turkish cigarettes and a pot of milkless tea.

Spratchley always poured her tea and then, while she drank it, peeled her orange, laying it carefully about the plate in its prepared divisions. As the heat of the tea floated aromatically up into her face, followed by the scent of the orange, she squirmed her shoulders against the pillows with luxuriation, aware of the first pleasure of wakefulness.

After she had eaten the orange—and sometimes in winter there was a little mound of castor sugar with which she could sweetly frost each quarter—she smoked her first cigarette, which Spratchley lit for her.

SUDDENLY, after the first smoke cloud had risen, the room was all life for her—it quivered with the scent of her powder, the aroma of tea and orange, and the delicious Turkish odour of her cigarette; and, in a way she never troubled to define, with the gently coughing presence of Spratchley.

She always drank three cups of tea, and as she began the second Spratchley sat down by the bed and prepared to read to her aloud from the newspapers.

She drank her tea with noiseless deliberation, pulling quietly at her cigarette, while Spratchley read out descriptions, perhaps, of strange women who allowed their husbands to bring home their mistresses to live under the same roof with them, or of married couples who, in fits of irresponsibility or boredom, changed partners on holiday for a night or two, as it were experimentally.

Sometimes scandal caught Spratchley unawares, leaving his mouth open in hesitation.

"Well, what is it, Spratchley? What are you jibbing for?"

"There's a piece here, miss——"

"Well, read it, man, read it. What do you suppose I am?"

Under the dry drone of Spratchley's reading the day woke fully, and a tenderness, a kind of cocoon of bemusement, descended on her slowly and softly, leaving her content.

Downstairs, at last, Spratchley took off his white house-jacket, rolled up his sleeves and

tied on the green baize apron that would make him ready for the world of Miss Jackie, trundling a wheelbarrow noisily over paths of crazy paving, whistling away her passions.

"I'm going to change the layout of the path, Spratchley. It's not wide enough. I want to bring it down in a wider sweep, in front of the rhodies and then out here and along by the pollies."

"Yes, miss."

"I'm sure it will be better, don't you?"

"Yes, miss."

"I've got some of the paving stones up and I've marked where I want them to go. Will you start laying at that end?"

"Yes, miss."

In the robust, encyclic, whistling, passionate world of Miss Jackie, he worked till noon. The sisters liked to have lunch at two. At twelve o'clock he took off the green baize apron and put on a white apron and began preparing vegetables.

In his white house-jacket, he had a bony stiffness of body that made him appear to stand to attention while serving Miss Constance's tea. In the apron of green baize he was not rigid. His limbs unbent from cragginess and became supple, his hands large and easy as they used the spade.

PROMPTLY at two o'clock he served lunch, putting on the white house-jacket just before he rang the gong. Miss Constance, already in afternoon dress, her hair set in crimped sharp waves, sat at one end of the oblong dining table, Miss Jackie in trousers and leather coat, with bobbed unbrushed hair at the other.

Miss Jackie did not like gravy on her vegetables; she preferred bread and cheese to sweet things. Miss Constance was fond of mustard, made rather thinly and freshly for every meal and set before her, dead centre, in a silver pot. She drank nothing with her meals except a large cup of weak white coffee when the pudding came, but Miss Jackie drank bottled beer poured froth-high into a pewter tankard, consuming it noisily, in long gulps, making a heavy clatter each time the tankard was set down.

They took it for granted that Spratchley knew, and would take care of, these little differences in their taste for things.

In the afternoon, Miss Jackie, who had perhaps been up since five o'clock in summertime, rested for a time on her bed so that she would be fresh to work again among her passions, in the evening, until supper time. It was Miss Constance's turn to enjoy the garden, sitting in a swing canopy, in shade that would be kind to a complexion that had by now received, like a bluer, pinker mask of muslin, its third or fourth coat of powder. In privacy and shade she would relish once again the flavour of the pieces Spratchley had first read to her from the newspaper.

She did not know what Spratchley did with himself during these hours of the day. She supposed he was occupied with, as she put it, "bits and pieces." But, as she said, "I never ask. I never interfere."

Spratchley, in fact, would be polishing the stairs or the hall or the dining-room; cleaning silver or washing windows; releasing blocked pipes and flues; repairing gutters after or against the threat of thunderstorms.

Each spring he painted the outside of the house, creosoted the gimcrack beams with their distant impression of baronial grandeur and retrained, under Miss Jackie's instruction, the roses and japonica that covered the walls. In summer he bottled and preserved the fruits Miss Jackie grew and in autumn he filled outhouses with the harvest of onions, apples and potatoes.

Every afternoon at four o'clock he took Miss Jackie's tea to her room. She liked it strong and black and in a breakfast cup. Miss Constance did not like her own, with lemon, until five. Miss Jackie, lying on the outside of the bed with a dressing-gown over her trousers, always needed to be woken by his gentle rusty coughing. Spratchley poured tea for her, watched her regain wakefulness under the first cup, very much as he watched Miss Constance in the morning, and then waited for what she had to say.

While Miss Constance sipped her tea, Spratchley, with practised care, prepared an orange

"You get on with the path and I'll do the edging. We ought to get it finished by supper time. Have we got manure? Bring up three or four barrowloads if we have. It will do the pollies good."

Divided between Miss Jackie, among the polyantha roses, and Miss Constance, greedily absorbed in the evening papers brought up by the newsboy from the station two miles away, Spratchley cooked and served supper at nine. After supper he could be heard wearily scrubbing the scullery or sweeping the yard outside the kitchen, or chopping kindling in the outhouse across the yard.

"Spratchley!" they would call to him then. "Jackie!—have you seen Spratchley about? . . . Connie!—for heaven's sake where is Spratchley?——" and their long cooing wails for him would explore, owl-like, the summer night air—"Spratchley! Coo-ee! Spratchley!"

AT eleven o'clock Miss Constance went to bed and, luxuriously propped by pillows, smoked a final cigarette and enjoyed a glass of whisky and water brought up by Spratchley on a tray. Miss Jackie preferred warm milk, with arrowroot wafers and the evening paper, in the lounge.

Spratchley stood for a short time with each of them, hovering with what might have been asthmatical coughs of hesitation while Miss Constance tasted the formula of whisky and water, and Miss Jackie sipped at the low warmth of her milk, dipping into it finally, like a child, two thin arrowroot wafers, before sucking them wetly and noisily away.

Then Spratchley, with a slight hunch of the shoulders that came, perhaps, from so often holding his hands together just below his chest, and a final series of small scraping coughs that might have been mere clearings of the throat for words that never came, said good night. Miss Constance and Miss Jackie, absorbed in whisky and milk and final words to read, said good night too, not quite perfunctorily but almost, each assuming that Spratchley and daylight, both inevitable, would eventually wake them.

BUT on a morning in October, Spratchley did not wake them. Miss Constance lay for more than half an hour in frowsy irritation at this lapse, and then finally got up and put on her dressing gown and went downstairs.

"Spratchley! Spratchley!" she called. "Jackie!—oh! there you are—what on earth has got into Spratchley?"

Spratchley slept downstairs in a tiny ten-by-eight bedroom that had once been a stillroom leading off the kitchen. The two sisters had never thought it their business to enter this room. Now, puzzled and irritated but not anxious, they stood outside, calling: "Spratchley! Spratchley!" in cooing, possessive, owl-like voices.

It was Miss Jackie who thought she heard groanings in answer. When she opened the door, the sudden sight of Spratchley's small iron bed, his clothes littered about the floor and of Spratchley himself, flat and cold-eyed in the bed, shocked her into pity.

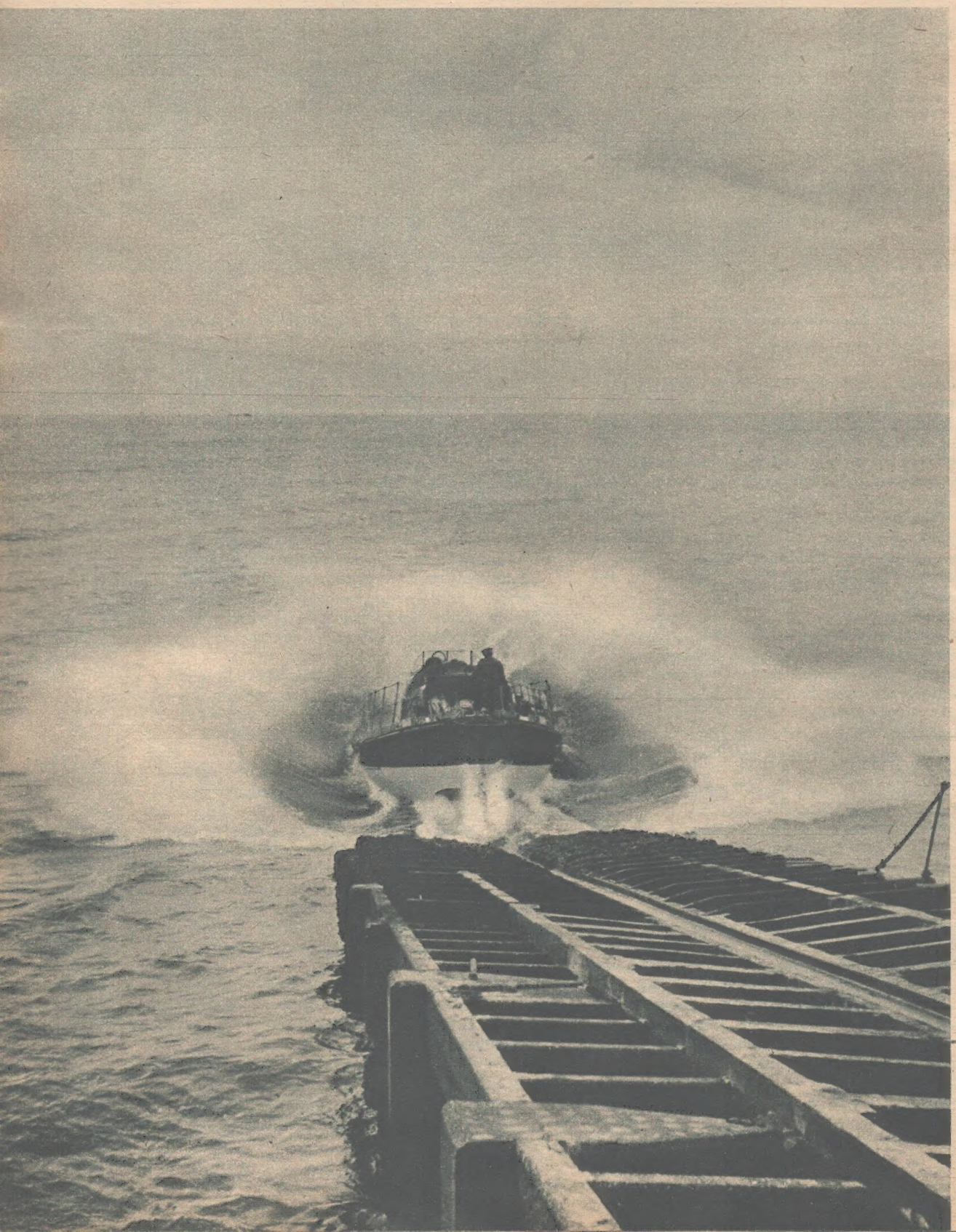
This pity for Spratchley took the form of a

Continued on page 36

Coxswain Davies plucks lives from the sea

by FRANKLIN RUSSELL

Some men weep when rescued; some embarrass the lifeboatmen with a kiss; others, says Davies, have been picked up roaring drunk



The Cromer lifeboat hits the water. Eight minutes after one S O S, Davies and his men—they had been scattered all over the town—were on their way

DURING A SQUALLY NORTHERN GALE off the coast of Norfolk in July, 1948, a French freighter alarmed coastguards by drifting inshore with dragging anchors and a severe list to port. Although the ship was only occasionally visible through fierce rain squalls and did not carry decipherable distress signals, a message was flashed to Henry Davies, coxswain of the Cromer lifeboat. Within ten minutes, he had his boat launched and was heading at eight knots for the ship.

When he reached the freighter, her position was already desperate. White-capped waves, whipped by tremendous gusts of wind, kept blotting the ship from view. As Davies steered in close, one huge wave smashed the lifeboat against the ship. One of the crew escaped a crushing death by inches. Davies ordered a line to be fired aboard the now rapidly sinking freighter, and the lifeboatmen quickly rigged up a breeches-buoy apparatus.

"There were four men left on the ship," recalls Davies, "when she suddenly sank beneath them. We just managed to rescue them all before they were scattered by the waves. We completed the rescue with minutes to spare."

Once a distress call is received at any of Great Britain's 156 lifeboat stations, the main aim of lifeboatmen is speed. The margin between life and death at sea is often so slender that a delay of a few minutes can result in disaster. When the Walmer lifeboat crew recently heard a rumour that a plane had come down off the Kent coast, they assembled at the station. When the rumour was confirmed, the boat hit the water in ninety seconds flat.

Dash To Save Crashed Jet

Immediately Davies receives a report that a ship or plane is in distress, he telephones his mechanic, Billy Davies, to start the lifeboat's engines.

Last August, an R.A.F. aerodrome near Norwich telephoned to say that a Meteor jet had crashed twelve miles off Cromer. In a bare eight minutes, Davies and his men came from all parts of the town to make their fastest unprepared launching.

Henry Thomas Davies, better known as "Shrimp," has been coxswain at Cromer since 1947, and in that time has taken his boat out about 150 times. He is a solid, weatherbeaten man who comes from a long line of fishermen and lifeboatmen. Men of his type, who have such gaudy names as Lantern, Will Doll, Measles, Jimmy Buttons, Yacker, Skinback and Crow, and who live by catching whelks and crabs, are a dying race in Britain, but there are still enough of them to provide the backbone of most lifeboat crews.

A stubborn refusal by all coastal folk to recognize the sea's dangers is a quality responsible for much of the service records of the Cromer lifeboat and of all others. Thirteen men once drowned at Rhosneigr, Anglesey, trying in vain to rescue a Polish airman in a crashed plane.

Boat Hurled Back On Beach

"I've seen men trying to launch an old lifeboat with oars, into waves that looked as high as houses," says Davies. "Each time, the boat was hurled back on the beach, and the launchers and boatmen would be screaming at each other in their frenzy to try again."

After a rescue, the lifeboat crew sees some curious emotional scenes from men who had expected death. Some men weep. Others are ill. The captain of a French ship recently grabbed Davies and kissed him on both cheeks.

Shrimp Davies and his eleven crewmen have

With his wife, Davies studies a picture of one of the first lifeboats. "I have nervous butterflies when my husband is at sea," Mrs. Davies admits

Henry Davies fastens his life-jacket, as the crew assembles beside the lifeboat Henry Blogg—named after a well-known former coxswain

no organized lifeboat routine when the boat is in its shed. It is maintained by a full-time mechanic and undergoes an annual overhaul. The main responsibility of the crew is to stay within hearing distance of the coastguard's mortar-like alarm maroons.

Davies's lifeboat, which weighs twenty-two and a half tons and has 220 watertight compartments, is equipped with twin forty-horsepower diesel engines, radio telephony, a loud hailer, an oil spray for calming turbulent seas, a line-throwing pistol and a searchlight. It is worth more than £30,000. It has a permanent crew consisting of coxswain, second coxswain, two mechanics, bowman and signalman. The remaining places in the forty-six foot boat are filled by the first six men on the spot.

"In the old days," says Davies, "they would fight for the privilege of getting aboard. Competition is still keen."

Wave Swept Crew Overboard

Lifeboatmen have little genuine fear of the sea, but Davies says that they all dread a breaking wave. In February, 1953, the Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, lifeboat was returning to its base when a wave rose unexpectedly, broke on the starboard quarter and turned the boat over. Six men trapped in the cockpit were drowned as crowds watched in bright sunlight from the pier.

Davies himself nearly died in similar circumstances on the day the English Trader, a seven-thousand ton cargo ship, was driven on to Hammond Knoll sandbank during an October gale. As the lifeboat was edging up to the lee side of the ship, a huge wave broke over the lifeboat and swept most of the crew overboard.

"I saw the guardrail shoot beneath me," says Davies, "but I didn't grab it because I thought the boat would capsize." The lifeboat did not go over, but it was half an hour before the men could be picked up; one of them, Primo Allen, later died of exposure.

The subsequent battle to save the forty-eight men of the English Trader, which ended with the loss of only four of them, included nearly all the hazards of lifeboat work which the people of Cromer dread. There was a bad storm, a fatality, a difficult wreck and a long wait. "When it's cold and rough, every minute your husband is away is an awful time," says the wife of one fifty-six year old lifeboatman. "You wonder to yourself whether his heart is strong enough to take the strain."

Kathleen Davies, Shrimp's wife and the handsome brunette mother of two daughters, says: "Most of us women have nervous butterflies when our husbands go out in the lifeboat." Last year, two of Shrimp's brothers, Jimmy and Frank, were drowned when overrun by a breaking wave in their fishing-boat.

Mrs. Davies was watching Shrimp bringing his fishing-boat home recently when a breaker swamped it. Shrimp and a mate were thrown clear, but the other crewman disappeared. As Shrimp struggled towards the overturned and bubbling boat, the third man reappeared from beneath it. "But from where I was on the shore, I could see only two heads in the water," says Mrs. Davies, "and I knew there were three men aboard. I nearly went frantic."

Lifeboatmen are inclined to minimize their exploits and bravery, partly because they so often find courage among the men they are rescuing. At one wreck, Davies remembers a huge wave washing the mate off the bridge. "Another man, whom we found out later was the ship's humorist, dived after him—but he couldn't do anything in the seas. He was caught in a breaking wave. As he disappeared, waving his arms at the lifeboat, he was heard faintly shouting his last joke . . . 'Taxi, taxi!'".

Shrimp Davies prefers to recall the humorous rather than the tragic incidents. He recalls how Kelly Harrison, a tough, nuggety fisherman, became exasperated with a terrified Asiatic who would not let go the side of his foundering ship. "Kelly grabbed him and booted him into the cockpit," says Davies. "The man bobbed up and said, 'Thank you very much.'"

Another time, the officers of a stricken foreign ship abandoned their vessel in a storm, equipped with a dinghy and a crate of wine. "By a miracle, they were picked up," says Davies. "They were roaring drunk."

Cromer stands strategically west of the Haisborough Sands; these lie ten miles off-shore, and are thirteen miles long—a notorious graveyard for ships. Once the town's beach was inundated by millions of oranges; more than once it has been drenched with oil. In Davies's experience, the sea has played some freakish tricks. A wrecked tanker, the Georgic, semi-sunken and down at the stern, was driven inshore during a fierce gale. The lifeboat was launched but no men could be seen aboard. The coastguard then reported by radio that another ship was wrecked on the Haisborough Sands. "When we got to the sands," says Davies, "we found that the second wreck was also called the Georgic. We had seen two halves of the same ship."

On another occasion, a collier, the Corcrest, which grounded on the sands, began breaking in half and the Cromer lifeboat landed the crew at Yarmouth. "On our way home," says Davies, "we met the Corcrest on her way into port." A steady north-westerly and a flood tide had freed the collier, and the lifeboat crew earned £70 each in salvage by saving ship as well as crew.

Each man in a lifeboat crew is paid £1 for launching and 5s. an hour after that. But when lifesaving responsibility is over, the crews are permitted to seek salvage so that other salvage crews do not unfairly get some reward from the lifeboatmen's work. As soon as the coxswain decides to try salvage all boat expenses are chargeable to the crew. Salvaging is always chancy. In helping recently to save a Swedish motorship, the Bosphorus, Davies and his men were faced with a £200 repair bill for the damaged lifeboat. Fortunately, salvage money later covered the expense. Salvage attempts are never undertaken if there is much danger to the boat.

Wives Have The Worst Job

The cruel sea is the natural habitat of most lifeboatmen, but nearly all of them maintain that their wives and children, who wait at home, have the worst job. Some wives are uncannily sensitive to the absence of their husbands. On the afternoon of the English Trader disaster, Kathleen Davies became restless. At 2.25 p.m., after checking the time by her sitting-room clock, she ran to see her mother-in-law, who tried to pacify her.

Hours later, the women learned that the lifeboat had run for Yarmouth with its sodden crew, before returning to the wreck to rescue forty-four men at ebb tide. Davies's wet clothes arrived in Cromer later. "His watch, which was among his things, was not waterproof," says Mrs. Davies. "It had stopped when he hit the water—at two twenty-five." THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM KEMP

THE STRANGE LAND

by ***HAMMOND INNES***

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

We were at our wits' end. How could we force this frail old man to believe us—against his own son?

SOMEWHERE below Kasbah Foum, where Morocco runs out into the Sahara, there was said to be a fortune in silver. Three men were interested in that desolate place, but only one had the rights to it. He was Jan Kavan—a wanted man.

My name is Philip Latham, and I had been instrumental in getting Kavan there. He was a Czech refugee scientist who had left England illegally (the Czechs were putting pressure on him to work for them).

I had hired him as doctor for my mission station in the Moroccan hills. But now there was no mission. It had been swept away in an appalling landslide.

The sole survivor was Julie Corrigan, a friend of mine; her brother had been killed in the catastrophe. I felt responsible for her—and for Kavan, too. I had smuggled him out of Tangier. . . . He had been afraid reprisals would be taken against his wife, Karen, in Prague. But, in fact, she had managed to get to Morocco. She was going to join us. .

It was then that Kavan had told us about

Kasbah Foum: the rights had been given to him by a dying Foreign Legion officer during the war. Kavan urged Julie and me to join him. Soon there might be plenty of funds to build a fine new mission. . . .

There was urgency in his quest. Ali d'Es-Skhira, revolutionary son of the local Berber chieftain, wanted the silver. And, when we got there, we found an American called Ed White actually at work on the site. He claimed he had a concession.

There was an extraordinary atmosphere at Kasbah Foum—of fear, of tension. The Berbers were near to revolt. They needed work and food—and White had antagonized them by using bulldozers instead of manual labour for his excavations.

It was imperative that we see Caid Hassan, the chieftain, to get Kavan's claim confirmed. But first we had to report to the nearest French Post.

Legard, the officer in charge, was friendly—until he received a phone call from his commandant in the next town.

We sat in Julie's old bus, waiting for him to return our papers. Outside, a desert sandstorm had turned day into night. I was very uneasy. I was willing to bet that the phone conversation had been about Kavan—and that he was still a wanted man. . . .

PART 4

Night At The Kasbah

ALTHOUGH we had parked in the lee of the Foreign Legion fort, the sand still found its way into the interior of the bus. I would have liked some sleep, but sleep was impossible. We just sat and watched the sand whirl past the windscreen, sifting like water over the long snout of the bonnet. A jeep passed us, battling against the swirling clouds of sand like a little mechanical toy. Legard was at the wheel, muffled in his Spahi cloak. He was driving towards the mountains.

"Why did he have to go to Agdz?" Jan asked. "He said he couldn't leave the Post until the food trucks arrived."

"Well, I'm glad I haven't got to drive through this in an open jeep," Julie said.

"He'll be clear of it in the mountains," I pointed out.

"Why don't we go to the mountains, then?"

I glanced round at her. She had her eyes closed and she looked tired.

"Why not go to Kasbah Foum?" Jan suggested.

"If you like."

I leaned forward and pressed the starter button.

It wasn't easy driving. Sand was sifting along the ground so thickly that it was difficult to see the *piste*, the desert track. It was like driving through a dead world. Nobody moved outside the *kasbah* walls or in the *palmerie*.

But at length the palm trees thinned, and as we climbed towards Kasbah Foum, the weight of the sand lessened. Soon we could see the mountains, a vague shadow looming up ahead of us like a heavy cloud formation photographed in sepia. There was the watch tower and the ruined city, and there, straight ahead of us, was the *kasbah* and the dark gash of the gorge.

In that queer half light the place looked inhospitable, almost hostile. There was a deadness about it. The tumbled graveyard of the ancient city seemed to be spilling down the hill on to the *kasbah*. The gorge was a yawning cavity in the mountains, remote and sinister.

I glanced at Jan. Those last lines of Browning's were in my mind: *And yet dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set, and blew. Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*

I pulled up close by White's tent and switched off the engine. The camp was deserted, but from the entrance to the gorge came the sound of a bulldozer working, carried to us faintly on the wind.

"We'll have some food and then you'd better get some sleep," I told Julie.

As soon as we had finished lunch, Jan left us, walking quickly up the track to the gorge. He looked a small and pathetically lonely figure against the immensity of the mountains.

"What will happen to him?" Julie asked.

"I don't know," I said.

Her hand touched my arm. "How deeply are you involved, Philip?"

"With the police?"

She nodded.

"Oh, I shouldn't get more than ten years," I said, trying to make a joke of it. But her eyes looked worried. "Get some sleep," I said. "There's nothing to be done about it now."

She hesitated, and then she nodded and went through into her compartment of the caravan. I stretched myself out on the berth behind the driving seat and pulled a rug over me. I must have slept, for I woke up with a start to the sound of a car drawing up alongside. It was a jeep and for a moment I thought it was Legard. But then I saw there was a Berber at the wheel, and it was Kostos, Ali's agent, who climbed out of the passenger seat. The Greek saw me and waved his hand.

"Where is Wade gone to?"

"Wade?" Wade was the name Kavan had used in Tangier. I laughed because it sounded so odd now. I pointed up to the mouth of the gorge and he nodded and climbed back into the jeep, which shot off up the track. I glanced at my watch. It was just after five. The wind had died away and all the sky over the *palmerie* was shot with red and gold and a soft violet blue as the sun sank.

I pulled on my shoes and hurried up the track. The gorge was already beginning to get dark and there was a damp chill about the place. It echoed to the thunder of machines, and as I rounded the base of the slide, I saw that both bulldozers were in operation. White was driving one and Jan the other, as though they had settled their differences and gone into partnership.

The jeep was parked close to the point where the rubble was being tipped into the water. Beside it stood Kostos and the Berber driver. Kostos was shouting and gesticulating in his endeavour to make himself heard above the roar of the diesel engine. As I came up, Jan stopped and switched off his engine. Seeing this, White stopped his engine, too, and in the sudden silence the Greek's voice, raised to a scream to make himself heard, was like the cry of some wild bird.

"I tell you, it is the last chance, do you hear?" His face was red with the effort of shouting.

And then I saw that the Berber standing silently beside him was Ali d'Es-Skhira.

JAN stared down at the pair of them from his seat on the bulldozer. "I told you I've made up my mind," he said. "And the answer is still no."

Ali took Kostos by the arm and they conferred together in a whisper. Finally Ali spoke to Jan in French. "You are not the man I am expecting to meet here."

"No," Jan said. "He's dead."

Ali nodded his head. His face showed no surprise. "But you have the deeds of Kasbah Foum?"

"Yes."

Again Kostos and Ali conferred together. "*C'est ça.*" Ali nodded and folded his hands in the sleeves of his *djellaba*.

Kostos now spoke. "My friend says that the original offer stands," he announced. "For the papers, five hundred thousand francs."

There was silence. Nobody moved.

After a moment, Ali turned his head slowly and gazed at the cliff face, now rapidly being cleared of debris. He glanced at Jan, and then, without a word, turned and climbed back into the jeep.

KOSTOS hesitated, looking from one to the other of us uncertainly. Then, with a quick, awkward movement, he scuttled into the jeep, his thin-soled shoes making a frail, scraping sound on the rocks. The jeep drove off and we watched it go, not moving or speaking until the sound of it died away, lost in the stillness.

"He knows now," Jan said to me.

"Yes."

"The wind has dropped, hasn't it?" His voice trembled slightly. "I think we should try and see the Caid right away."

"We should have gone before," I said.

He nodded. "Of course. But it seemed a pity that this bulldozer should not be operating. And we're so close to the entrance now." There was warmth and excitement in his voice again. "White doesn't know the exact location of the entrance. But I do. Marcel Duprez gave me bearings. Another two days' work. . . ." He stopped there, his excitement damped by my silence. "What's the matter, Philip? You're worried about Ali. Is that it?"

"Yes," I said. "It's a pity we didn't see the Caid this afternoon. So long as Ali thought you were Wade, there was no reason for him to oppose the visit. But now . . . it may be dangerous."

"I'm sorry." He climbed down off the bulldozer. "I didn't think. I was too excited."

Ed White came over to us then. "It looks

At the door, Julie caught my arm. "Be careful, Philip," she said softly. "Please be careful"

Ali's hand came down on the old man's shoulder. "These men are strangers," he said. "They want the silver—nothing more. They must not have it"

JOHN BULL announces the story of the year

Paul Brickhill's latest—and finest—book

REACH FOR THE SKY

The stirring life story of
DOUGLAS BADER
legless hero of war and peace

"YOU ARE LEAVING BEHIND AN EXAMPLE WHICH AS THE YEARS ROLL BY WILL BECOME A LEGEND"—*the message sent by Sir James Robb, Chief of Fighter Command, to Douglas Bader on his retirement from the R.A.F. in 1946.*

NEXT WEEK, JOHN BULL begins publication of *Reach For The Sky*, the deeply moving story of a man's battle against—and triumph over—a most cruel disability. Written by Paul Brickhill, author of two great JOHN BULL successes, *The Dam Busters* and *Escape—Or Die*, it is a magnificent study of the life of Group Captain Douglas Bader, D.S.O., D.F.C., legless leader of "The Few."

It was Douglas Bader's wartime deeds that brought him fame. But his *real* triumph—a story hitherto largely unknown—began in 1931. Bader was then twenty-one and on top of the world—a dashing, handsome young airman whose display of aerobatics had been the hit of the Hendon show; whose chances of an England cap at rugby football seemed certain.

Then came tragedy. Challenged to perform aerobatics in an unsuitable plane, Bader crashed. His legs had to be amputated; the right above the knee, the left six inches below.

This might have been the end of any other man's story. For Bader it was the beginning. Aided by two artificial legs—and an aggressive determination to be on a par with other men—he taught himself to walk again *without a stick*. To drive a car. And to fly again.

Then came a second blow. The Air Ministry decided that a legless man could not remain as a pilot in the R.A.F. Without a job or civilian trade, Bader found himself adrift in a world of mounting unemployment.

In a black sky there was one bright star—Thelma, a girl who had no qualms about sharing her future with a legless man. Bader found a job and they got married—in secret. And all the while, Bader drove himself to perform new miracles on his artificial legs. He mastered golf, tennis, even squash—thumping and creaking around the court till the rivets would pop out of his metal legs.

Bader the pilot: twenty-two enemy planes destroyed

Bader the golfer: eighteen holes in seventy-seven

Magnificently fit, he was ready when war came. He fought his way back into the R.A.F., soon rose to command five squadrons. In the air, his exuberance and utter disregard for danger were contagious; his leadership inspiring. During the Battle of Britain he evolved new fighter tactics which were a major contribution to our victory.

In August, 1941, he was captured after a collision with a Messerschmitt over France. Within a matter of days, Bader made his first escape—down a rope of sheets from the third floor of a hospital. Betrayed and recaptured, he became the *enfant terrible* of a succession of prison camps, finally landing himself in the notorious Colditz prison.

Peace has not slackened his restless, dynamic pace. He still plays golf—with scores in the seventies—still flies the world, now for a famous oil company. The legend grows—an inspiration not only to the limbless, but to all who are faced with adversity.

Paul Brickhill's account of Douglas Bader's life is more human than the best of novels. No one who admires courage should miss reading *Reach For The Sky*.

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like you really have got the deeds of Kasbah Foum," he said.

Jan nodded.

"I see." He stood staring at us for a moment. "That makes a difference, doesn't it?" He seemed about to say something further, but instead he turned and walked slowly back across the rubble and climbed back up on to the driving seat of his bulldozer again. The engine started with a roar and the lumbering machine turned back towards the cliff-face.

"Come on," Jan said abruptly, gripping my arm. "We must see the Caid right away."

"It'll be night before we get there."

"I know, I know. But that may help." He glanced back as a beam of light cut the gloom of the gorge. Ed White had switched on his headlights. "I was a fool. I forgot all about Kostos coming here at five. . . . We'll go and have some tea with Julie. You English are always less pessimistic after you've had some tea. Then we'll go to Kasbah Foum-Skhira."

"We'll need a guide," I said.

He didn't say anything and we walked in silence out of the gorge. The sun had set and a velvet twilight was rapidly descending on the valley. But the *palmerie* was still visible, and I could just make out the brown of the *kasbah* towers rising above the dusty green of the palms. I wished we had visited the place in daylight.

As we neared the camp, I saw something move along the darkening bed of the stream. It was a black, compact mass of movement. I strained my eyes and it resolved itself into a herd of goats being driven by a small boy. Jan had seen it, too, and he said, "Perhaps the boy would guide us to the *kasbah*?"

"A boy hasn't much authority," I said doubtfully. "They might not admit us. But if we could get his father. . . ." I turned off the track and scrambled down the bank. Jan followed me.

THE boy had stopped now and was watching us nervously. I called to him in his own language to come and speak with us, but he didn't move. And when we came up to him he stood, regarding us with wide, solemn eyes. He was like a startled animal, and I was afraid he would turn and run at any moment.

I explained to him that I wanted to speak with his father, but he stared at me out of his large, awed eyes and said nothing. Probably I was the first European who had ever spoken to him.

After a moment, I put my hand in my pocket and pulled out two hundred-franc notes. I held them out to him. He smiled shyly, eagerly, and shook his head. I knew he understood and I waited. Then suddenly he leaned forward, swift as a bird, grabbed the notes from my fingers, and with a little shriek of excitement went scampering away after his goats, which had gradually merged into the dusk as they drifted from reed tuft to reed tuft.

We watched him rounding them up with shrill cries of *"Aiya! Aiya!"* driving them towards the ruined *kasbah*. "Will he bring his father to us?" Jan asked.

"I think so," I said, and we went on to the caravan.

We had just settled down to tea when the boy's figure went flying past, bare feet scuttering over the sand, scarcely seeming to touch the ground; a small, flickering shadow in the gathering dusk.

I turned the bus then and switched on the sidelights, and soon afterwards the boy appeared with his father. He was an oldish man, tall and slightly stooped, with a long, pale face heavily lined with years of sun and sand. We exchanged greetings and I invited him into the caravan. He sent the boy off and, after slipping his feet out of his sandals, he climbed in and seated himself cross-legged on the berth. From an inner pocket he produced the two hundred-franc

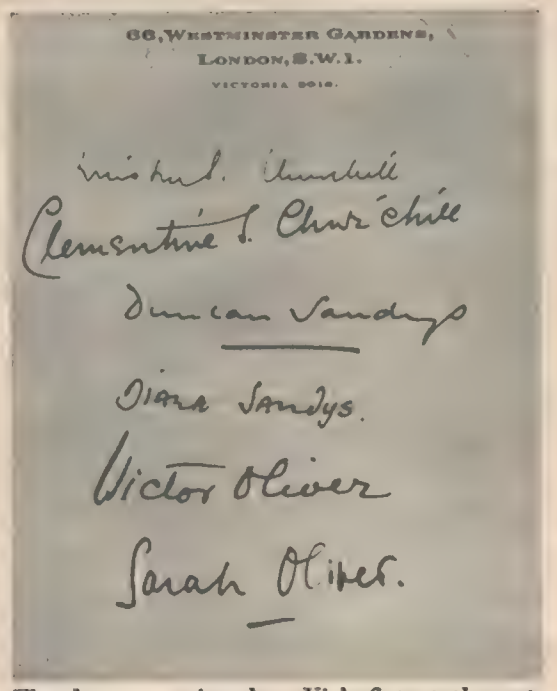
Continued on page 26

"I contributed to the war effort by making people laugh," says Vic. In 1940, he starred in *Hi Gang!* with Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon

GAY ADVENTURE (5) by VIC OLIVER

Sarah and I share Britain's most stirring days

"Colour, gaiety, and pretty girls are what people want in war," said George Black. Vic joined him to stage a show that made London sparkle



66, Westminster Gardens,
London, S.W.1.
Victoria 8010.

Winston S. Churchill
Clementine S. Churchill
Duncan Sandys
Diana Sandys.
Victor Oliver
Sarah Oliver.

The document signed at Vic's flat at the outbreak of war. The same afternoon, Churchill was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty

FOR ME, THE WAR started with two incidents, one comic, the other poignant. At that time, I was married to Sarah Churchill, and we lived in a Westminster flat between Randolph Churchill on the floor above and C. B. Cochran and his wife on the floor below. Half an hour after we heard Mr. Chamberlain announce that hostilities had begun, the sirens sounded and we rushed down to the flat below to help the crippled Cochran into the lift.

We were hurrying into the recently constructed shelter in the grounds when a voice from above cried out: "What are you people doing down there?" We looked up and saw Randolph Churchill poking his head out of his ninth-floor window. "We're going into the air-raid shelter," I timidly explained. "Aren't you coming?"

Randolph laughed scoffingly. "Like hell I am," he said, and shut the window.

We sat miserably in the shelter, weighed down by the thought of war and not a little frightened that the bombs we had been told to expect might soon be falling. Instead, the "All Clear" sounded. As we filed out of the shelter, C. B. Cochran happened to glance up. "Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "This shelter has no roof." I looked up and saw blue sky. Hitler had beaten the contractors to it.

The poignant incident came at lunch-time. Knowing that Mr. and Mrs. Churchill and Diana and Duncan Sandys were in town, we invited them and Randolph to eat with us. Afterwards, we cracked a bottle of champagne and Mr. Churchill proposed the toast: "Victory."

His eyes glistened. "No one would listen to my warnings," he said, "but now that war is here, we shall have to forget the past. Britain shall never yield to her enemies." Then we sat down again, and the six of us signed our names on a sheet of my notepaper. For that document, I have been offered £3,000 by an American collector, but I would not part with it for all the rice in China.

We next discussed what we should do in the war. Randolph was his usual bellicose self. "I shall join my regiment," he announced. Duncan

Sandys said the same thing, though more quietly. Mr. Churchill was sadder than I had ever known him. At this supreme crisis, he was a political outcast. "For me," he said, "there is nothing."

Suddenly, the phone rang. It was for Mr. Churchill. "I'll take it in the bedroom," he said. When he returned, there were tears in his eyes. There was a moment's silence; then Mrs. Churchill said, very kindly: "Tell us."

Mr. Churchill cleared his throat. "They have given me a job. I am First Lord of the Admiralty."

Even at this time, Mr. Churchill refused to break his lifelong habit. It was two o'clock and time for his afternoon nap. He retired to our bedroom and an hour and a half later came back looking vigorous and fresh. "Where are you going now?" we asked when he called for his outdoor clothes. "To the Admiralty," he said. "The Bremen is on the high seas and I'm going to get her." With that, he left.

"My Duty To Return Home"

For Sarah and me, the war posed a personal problem. Though she was deeply implicated from the start, I was an American citizen and, technically, it was my duty to return home. Nevertheless, I had strong emotional ties with this country and I preferred living here to in America. It was a racking choice. Fortunately, the period of the "phoney war" enabled me to defer my decision.

When war broke out, the government ordered all theatres to be closed, and the show *Black And Blue*, in which I had been appearing at the Hippodrome, was taken off. For three weeks I had no work, but at the end of that time George Black rang me. "Things seem to be settling down again," he said. "Would you like to try a few variety dates?"

I was only too glad to work again. Wherever I went, I found that, far from shunning theatres, people were eager to forget the war.

Apparently, George Black had the same idea, for a few weeks later he rang me again. "How would you like the comic lead in a luxury musical?" he asked. I gasped. Most managements were reflecting the wartime drabness with utility shows in which they risked nothing. "I'm going to give the public colour, gaiety and pretty girls," said Black. "That's what they want. Will you come in?" I was delighted to take the part.

Frances Got Her Own Way

Black Velvet was a tremendous success with the glamour-starved public. As far as possible, we tried to make the audience participate in the show; during the interval, chorus girls went down in the auditorium to dance with lonely soldiers. Black's calculations were right. We ran for sixteen months.

It was in *Black And Blue* that I had first met Frances Day, one of the gayest and most volatile artists I know. She was a genius at getting her own way, and in *Black Velvet* she had to sing a song which she considered unsuited to her voice. She told Black so, but he refused to believe it. "Anyway," he said, "try it for tonight."

Now, Frances had her own pianist and used to announce her own numbers. When her song-spot came on, she merely omitted the song. Black was furious. She smiled inveiglingly. "But, George, darling, you know it doesn't suit my voice," she crooned. Black scowled. "Put it in next time," he snapped.

Frances omitted the song again and again. Finally, Black had to give in. "From tonight," he said, "you can leave that song out."

Frances beamed. "But George, darling, I told you that it didn't suit my voice."

One of the juniors in *Black And Blue* was Phyllis Luckett, a talented young girl whom I met early in 1939 when we toured together in *Idiot's Delight*. Phyllis had no father, so I suggested to Sarah that we should ask her to stay with us and treat our home as hers. Though I never adopted her in the legal sense of the word, she changed her name to Oliver by deed-poll, as I thought it would help her in show business.

After appearing in several of my wartime shows, Phyllis decided that she could best help the war effort by becoming an ambulance driver in the Royal Army Medical Corps. When she was demobilized, she believed she was too old to continue in show business and emigrated to America, where she soon found a husband. She now has two children and writes to me every week.

Besides appearing in *Black Velvet* and broadcasting occasionally, I had already, at the end of 1939, started playing charity concerts for the troops. Some years before, Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon had appeared at the Palladium and, as I was the only other American on the bill, they had come to me for advice.

The previous week, at their first engagement in a British theatre, Ben had upset an audience at the Empire, Glasgow, by saying in his curtain speech how happy they were to appear before an *English* audience.

He and Bebe had asked me to give them hints on the British way of looking at things. We had remained friends ever since and now, with Charles Forsyth and Addie Semon, also Americans, we formed a sort of private Ensa.

Disagreement With Sarah

Sometimes we appeared together, sometimes alone. Whenever I was in London, I played at camps and factories in the London area. When I was on tour, I asked the theatre manager to arrange free concerts locally. Often, I broadcast on *Workers' Playtime*. I believe that these free war-time shows—of which I did more than any other artist with the possible exception of Tommy Trinder—laid a solid foundation for my postwar popularity.

It was during the first months of war that clouds began to gather on the horizon of my married life. As Sarah was in repertory, mostly away from London, we saw each other less and less. Even our common interest in show business, which had drawn us together and might have been expected to cement our marriage, became in fact a source of disagreement.

It has always been my policy to keep show business completely separate from my private life. I never hold "business" parties and rarely attend them. If I invite friends, we talk racing, golf or football—never show business.

Sarah, however, made show business her whole life. She invited show people to our flat and they would spend hours discussing technique. As I had been on the stage for eighteen years by this time, for me the novelty had worn thin. I began to wish that Sarah were a little less keen.

A Profession—Or An Art?

At the same time, our attitudes to the business were diametrically opposed. I saw the stage purely as a way of making money. Sarah saw it as a form of art. Sometimes, she would leave the stage—the applause ringing in her ears—worrying that her performance had not been perfect. For me, applause justified anything. At this time, there was no separation or talk of divorce, just a feeling of uneasiness about the future.

Throughout 1940, I became more deeply attached to this country. Complete strangers stopped me in the street to congratulate me for not returning to America. In May, Winston Churchill, my father-in-law, became leader of the free world. But I still dithered; I had not yet made a final decision.

One day, early in 1940, Bebe Daniels rang me at my flat. "Vic," she said, "we've a wonderful idea for a show." That night, I drove out to the Lyons' flat in Paddington to find out what it was all about. Ben Lyon was enthusiastic. "I'll be the downtrodden one," he said, "you be the smart one and Bebe will be on your side against me. We'll insult each other for all we're worth." For good measure he suggested having a guest artist each week. The guest would do something outside his normal line for which he had a secret ambition.

Frances Day and Vic Oliver first met in *Black* the war. A few weeks later, they were together

At the end of the session, I was a little sceptical. When we approached the B.B.C., they adopted the attitude I had anticipated. Our show was to be built on insults—and insults were un-British. To make it worse, we were not appearing in comic character rôles; we were appearing as ourselves—Vic Oliver, Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon. The audience would lose its respect for us if it heard us insult each other, said the B.B.C. representative.

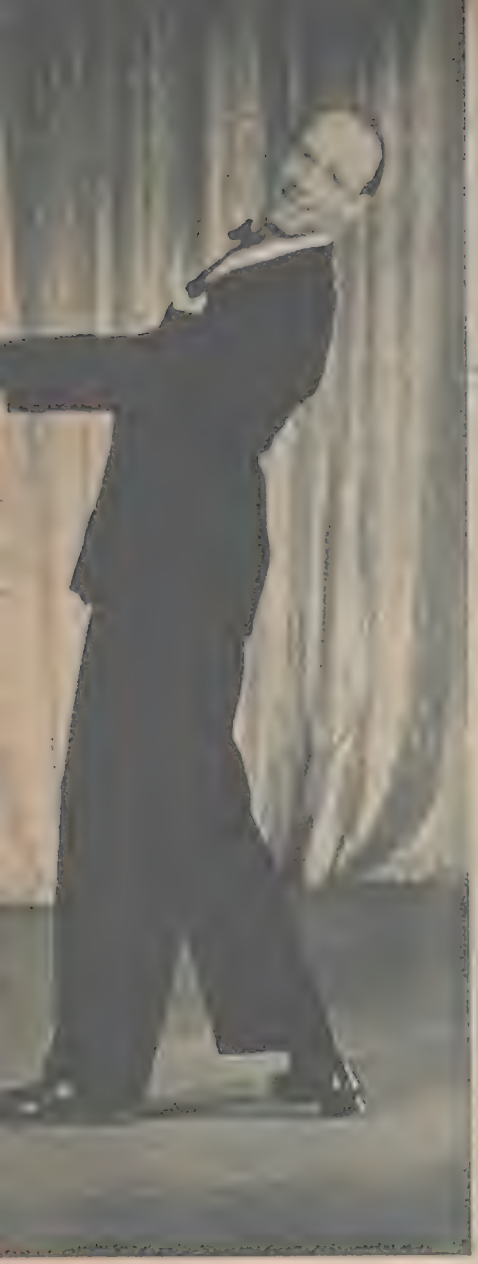
"But it's been done in America for years," protested Ben.

The B.B.C. official shrugged. "Oh! America . . ." he said, as though we had mentioned a poor relation.

After weeks of brow-beating, we persuaded them to let us make a trial recording at the Maida Vale studios. The show as a whole, though not brilliant, was sufficiently good for the B.B.C. to use it as the first of a series of six. Because of Ben's current predilection for greeting everyone with the monosyllable "Hi!" we had already decided to call it *Hi Gang!*

The first programme was rightly criticized in the newspapers as being poor. The second and third were not much better and, as our contract was for six broadcasts only, we began to be worried because the B.B.C. had so far showed no signs of wanting to extend it. Into the fourth show, we put everything we had.

That fourth programme really went with a bang. I think there were two reasons for the improvement. First, I had suggested that we



and Blue, a show which was closed by again in a big success—*Black Velvet*

Vic Oliver and his manager, Natalie Conder, after their wedding at Caxton Hall in 1946. "One reason for the success of my present marriage," writes Vic, "is the fact that my former marriage never intrudes"

should extend the insult treatment to the guest star. Instead of one of us saying in a reverent voice: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have much pleasure in presenting Mr. John Gielgud," John Gielgud would be left standing awkwardly at the microphone until Ben happened to notice him.

"Who *is* this guy?" Ben would ask in a puzzled voice.

"Shush, Ben," Bebe would say respectfully, "that's John Gielgud." Then I would chime in: "Who's John Gielgud?"

The second reason for our improvement was our greater familiarity with each other. In the previous programmes, we had not carried the insult technique to its logical conclusion. Not wanting to steal each other's laughs, we held back slightly. In the fourth programme, we really lashed each other.

Listening Figures Zoomed

The B.B.C. now extended our contract for another six weeks: they were still unsure of us. However, the listening figures for the sixth, seventh and eighth programmes zoomed so high that, just before the ninth, we were given a contract for another twenty-six weeks. Altogether *Hi Gang!* was on the air for 128 consecutive performances and only ended when Ben Lyon joined the U.S. Army Air Force.

From the autumn of 1940, our lives were perpetually hag-ridden by the air raids. As far as possible, we ignored the bombs. Mr. Churchill knew this and often, at the height of a raid, he would ring us at our eighth floor flat and order Sarah and me to take cover. Finally, we yielded so far as to take another flat on the second floor for sleeping.

The B.B.C. had a wartime rule that all doors were to be locked when a raid was on—to stop the studio audience rushing into the street. Often, when we had finished broadcasting from a cellar at Broadcasting House, we would be forced to sit around chatting and nibbling sandwiches until perhaps 1 a.m.

Ben, who suffers slightly from claustrophobia, used to walk up and down, sick and sweating. I, too, was impatient. One night, when we were finally released at 2 a.m., it was too late for me to go home to change and, instead, I drove straight out to Chartwell, where we had been invited for the weekend.

When I returned to our flat the next day, I felt a little more respect for the B.B.C.'s precautions. A bomb had completely destroyed one wing of our block, killing two people and injuring many others—including those on the second floor.

Some weeks after this, we were promoted to the Paris Cinema, which the B.B.C. had recently bought to use as a recording studio. It was two floors below street level and though Ben, with his claustrophobia, complained so vigorously that the B.B.C. abandoned its policy of locking us in, most of us were quite happy to stay there during raids.

Luckily, it was only after the blitz was over that one of us opened for the first time a door off the main studio. We found it led on to a shaft. Above was the open sky. All through the bombing there had been nothing between the studio roof and the German aeroplanes.

When the blitz started, I was still appearing in *Black Velvet* at the Hippodrome, and after the show I did cabaret at the Savoy. By midnight, the raids were usually at their worst and the Savoy management thought it wise to move the cabaret from the main floor to a cellar which held only fifty or sixty people. Alongside was a shelter fully equipped with mattresses and blankets in which customers could sleep after the show.

The thuds and crashes from outside may have been alarming to the clientele—to me they were utterly frustrating. Many a time, after I had carefully worked up to a punch-line, a bomb would fall and completely ruin the whole effect.

One night, I cracked a joke about the time I held a party. "Instead of R.S.V.P.," I said, "I had B.Y.O.M. printed at the bottom of the invitation card." I paused for effect. Just as I started to explain that B.Y.O.M. stood for "Bring your own mattress," there was a crash outside, and my audience were left wondering what the point of the joke was.

After a time, I began to think that I could do something more to help people over their anxieties and conceived the idea of touring the shelters during the raids. Frank Cox, my chauffeur-cum-valet, would drive me round in a small car, and I would spend ten to fifteen minutes in each shelter, just long enough to cheer the people with a few gags and a tune on the violin.

Land-mine Rocked The Taxi

One night, I was on my way in a taxi to the Savoy cabaret when a land-mine exploded not more than two hundred yards ahead. The taxi lurched as though it had been slapped by a giant hand and one of the windows splintered. The driver turned back and found another way so that I arrived at the Savoy on time. Nevertheless, the experience convinced me that it was perhaps wiser for me to stay in the Savoy shelter after the show.

In the spring of 1941, the American Consul in London informed me officially that the last

Continued on page 40

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OF MAIDSTONE

Rudolph Agnew, manager of Kalgoorlie's largest mining company, inspects oil flotation plant which wins from the ore ninety-two per cent of its gold

Window-shoppers in Hannan Street, named after the man who found Kalgoorlie's gold, give the feminine touch to a masculine town

Kalgoorlie's gold-diggers live down their past

by KEITH ELLIS

Sixty-one years ago, it was a patch of desert. Then they struck the Golden Mile. Now Kalgoorlie is living down its boom town days, and solid citizens will welcome the Queen

KALGOORLIE, AUSTRALIA

AMONG THE WEDDING GIFTS received by Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh was a pair of bookends presented by the mayor and citizens of Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. They were made of polished mulga wood; one was studded with gold replicas of the seals of five local authorities, and the other was decorated with a solid gold model of pithead winding gear. It was a fitting present from the prosperous mining centre which the Queen and the Duke will visit on March 26, breaking for seventy-five minutes their flight to Perth.

Kalgoorlie lies on the edge of what is claimed to be the richest square mile of land in the world. Since it was discovered in the 1890s, the "Golden Mile" has produced more than a thousand tons of solid gold, which is worth at today's prices about £398 million. Rudolph Agnew, an English-trained mining engineer who is manager of the Lake View and Star, biggest of the handful of companies which work the area, says: "One of our shafts goes down 4,100 feet, so it's not so much a golden square mile as a golden cubic mile."

Apart from the 3,200 men who work on the Golden Mile, everyone in Kalgoorlie lives on gold, talks gold and dabbles in gold for a hobby.

The best-known policeman is Detective Sergeant Fred Douglas of the Gold Stealing Detection Staff. Paul Wood, the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Kalgoorlie representative, is honorary secretary of the Amalgamated Prospectors Leasehold Association, which is the nearest approach the individualistic prospectors have to a trade union. Even the miners who spend their week working for wages on the Golden Mile drive into the bush at weekends to seek a goldmine of their own. Appropriately, the town's daily newspaper is the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

According to Agnew, whose miners now earn between £A20 (£16) and £A25 (£20) for a five-day week, mining gold is in some ways easier than mining coal. Six main shafts plumb the 684 acres covered by his company's leases. A hundred and thirty-two miles of tunnel honeycomb the earth beneath on ninety different levels. Each lode of gold-bearing rock is slashed by workings every hundred feet.

"We don't have many accidents," says Agnew, "except for a few roof falls. One of my best men was killed recently when he was

When miners cool off in Kalgoorlie, rolled-up trousers and sandals are correct dress. Draught beer costs 11d. a schooner (a half-pint glass). In March, temperatures can top a hundred degrees

loading a heap of tailings for re-treatment. The whole pile collapsed on top of him and we couldn't get him out. Sometimes you may just be lucky and have a pocket of air near you. Even then, the weight of sand on your chest may make it physically impossible for you to breathe."

The heap of tailings (as rejected waste is called) was worth re-treating because it had first been processed before the oil flotation method came into use in the early thirties. The principle is said to have been discovered by an American miner's wife when she was washing her husband's clothes. She found that instead of sinking to the bottom of the tub, tiny particles of metal were caught in the soap-suds and actually floated on top of the water.

The process subsequently developed was first introduced into Kalgoorlie by the Lake View and Star. By using it, Agnew's men extract from the ore ninety-two per cent of its gold. They get about a quarter of an ounce of gold from each ton of ore they treat.

Ore Smuggled From Mines

Unfortunately, the fact that rich ore may suddenly sparkle in a lode of uninteresting-looking stone has occasionally proved too great a temptation to some miners.

Fred Douglas explains how "gim," as stolen ore is called, is smuggled out of the mine. "The thieves put it in small canvas sample bags used by testers and sling it round their necks," he says. "Each bag holds six or seven ounces of ore and when it's resting under the loose folds of their overalls, just above the belt, it's difficult to detect."

The thief hides his gim or takes it home, and later gets in touch with a buyer in the back room of a pub. "He usually gets about thirty shillings a pound for it," says Douglas, "and on a rich patch, he may be filling his seven-ounce bag every day of the week. Australian miners don't regard gold-stealing as a crime —they've been doing it for so long that they seem to look upon it as a perquisite."

As an example of the thief's almost casual attitude, Douglas cites the case of a miner whose house he was searching with another detective. They were rummaging under a chair cushion when the miner suddenly shouted with laughter. "You ought to have come last night," he said. "Then you might have found something."

Unless he has some reasonable ground for suspicion, Douglas has no authority to search miners and rarely does so. One exception to this was when he and another detective had a tip that a young miner would be on the Perth train with a bag of gim.

Douglas asked quietly if they could see what was in his bag. The young man lugged it off the rack and threw it open. Inside, was a mass of rock liberally streaked with glittering yellow veins. Douglas and his companion, both old mining hands, burst out laughing. "There wasn't a bit of gold there," he explains. "It was all iron pyrites or new chum's gold, not worth a penny. We told the inexperienced young man that he was extremely lucky and let him go."

Since there is always the possibility of local people sympathizing with the thieves, Douglas has to be discreet. Once, when they knew that a buyer was driving a load of gim along a road at night, he and other detectives formed an unorthodox road-block by waving beer bottles, singing loudly and pretending to be a party of roisterers.

When the driver stopped his car and got out to reason with them, another detective leaped from the shadows and pinioned his arms. As the detection staff suspected, he was carrying gim.

Prospectors from every part of Western Australia make Kalgoorlie the headquarters of their restless search for a fortune. Paul Wood reckons there are about 250 full-time prospectors in the state. "They start in their twenties," he says. "They're usually the sons of miners who prefer the freedom of the bush life. Nowadays, the successful prospector is the intelligent one."

A prospector who exactly fits Wood's description is thirty-four year old Dan Doherty, a bronzed, sinewy man with piercing blue eyes and unruly light brown hair. "I reckoned that pen-pushing in an Inland Revenue office wasn't a healthy life for a man," he says. "Besides, I was getting nowhere and the war had set me back."

Over the ledgers and tax forms, he dreamed of his childhood in a small mining town. When he was twelve, his class was shown the newly discovered Golden Eagle, the largest piece of free gold ever found in Western Australia.

That January, Jim Larcombe, an old and not very successful prospector, had almost decided to abandon the piece of land he was working when a friend announced that he had found an eighty-ounce nugget on an adjoining block. Larcombe persevered, but at the end of a week he was once more ready to give up.

On January 15, 1931, at 2.30 p.m., his seventeen-year-old son, Jim, was hacking at a hard bar of rock when he announced suddenly: "Dad, I've got a nugget."

His father was impatient. "Pull it out," he snapped. Jim pulled and teased for a few more minutes, then said: "I can't. It's too big." His father helped him to free it, and they found it was more than two feet long, almost a foot wide and up to two and a half inches thick. From its distinctive shape, they called it the Golden Eagle.

Nugget He Could Not Lift

"When we saw this nugget, the schoolteacher asked the class who would like to lift it," says Doherty. "Like a fool I volunteered. But when I got out to the front, I tugged and strained but just couldn't move it." The nugget weighed seventy-eight pounds. At today's values, it was worth more than £11,500.

One day, Doherty walked out of his job and took a ticket to Kalgoorlie. He worked in the mines, studied at the School of Mines and prospected on his own. Today he has a quarter share in a "show" in the far north-west of Australia, inland between Caernarvon and Onslow. With his two partners (who each have a three-eighths share), Doherty lives in a wooden hut with a water-proof roof.

By outback standards, they are in touch with the outside world, having a well pretty near and a weekly mail delivery. They have a radio and, to give himself something to think about while digging, Doherty reads books on technical and philosophical subjects for an hour a day.

"Ninety per cent of prospectors are no-hopers," he says. "They say time does not cost them anything. For me, time is money." He and his partners haul their ore with a petrol-driven winch, instead of the slower hand-windlass. They spent £1,000 on their own battery to save the cost of carting the ore to the state treatment plant. They still dig by hand, but hope to install pneumatic drills. Doherty plans eventually to develop old mines abandoned as uneconomic before present methods came into use.

Before searching for gold on Crown land, a prospector pays 5s. for a licence called a Miner's Right. When he finds gold, he pegs out a prospecting area of twenty-four acres and registers it for a fee of 10s. After eighteen months, he must either convert this to a lease or abandon it. Once found, a mine may produce untold wealth or a few hundred pounds.

Home From Bush For Weekend

"Most prospectors don't become exceptionally rich," says Paul Wood. "They return each weekend to a moderately prosperous home in town and go back to work in the bush." A mine may last a few months, five years or a lifetime. "One man found a mine when he was twenty-five. He is now forty and has raised a family on it. Another mine discovered in 1909 is still bringing in from £2,500 to £3,500 a year for the two families who live on it. It will probably last for another fifteen years—and there's no income tax on gold-mining gains."

There is still the chance of making a fortune; for despite the skill needed in modern prospecting, the best prospectors do not always make the richest finds. A few years ago, two prospectors

Continued on page 43

THE EDGE OF SUICIDE

by DAVID BEATY

ILLUSTRATED BY CLIVE UPTTON

It was so dangerous the crew felt sick to think of it. The airliner was stuck on the brink of a precipice. And the precipice was melting

FOR FIVE DAYS NOW, ever since the crash, Dog Zebra had lain as quietly as a huge dead bird by the edge of the lake. She showed very little damage, considering Captain Farrington had been forced to pull the undercarriage up in order to stop.

Snow covered most of the dents and tears on her long, legless fuselage. The blades of the inboard propellers had been bent into sickles, but the outer engines, placed high on the wing, were untouched. And yet it was unlikely that she would ever fly again. The ground shelved away rapidly beneath the eighty-ton aircraft, and her blunt steel nose teetered on the brink of a three-hundred-foot precipice that dropped vertically down to the deep water below.

In an effort to make a bulwark to keep her from slipping head-first into Gulfrange Lake, snow and ice had been packed tightly round the front of her wings and fuselage. And two tractors, too small to be at all effective in lugging her backwards uphill on to the runway, but the only emergency equipment available at this isolated landing-ground, were still connected by wire rope to the towing points round her tail. They might at least hold her from beginning the fatal move forward.

At present, the ice wall was holding well, and there was nobody around her. The only sound was a soft whistling noise through the pilot's half-open window, made by a slight south-west wind that was bringing warmer air over Newfoundland. The meteorological office had forecast a general thaw beginning at midnight.

INSIDE the Nissen hut, where Dog Zebra's crew was accommodated, the atmosphere was very different from the peaceful coma of the aircraft outside. The five of them were just finishing supper. Captain Farrington pushed aside his apple tart.

"There's some coffee on the stove, sir," the radio officer said.

"Not for me, thanks, Mr. Mulloy." He got up, and put on his greatcoat. As he opened the door, a cold blast of air rushed in to warm itself by the fire. Before it shut again, the engineer officer said: "Thank God."

The others stopped eating and looked up. In complete silence they watched the door slowly closing. The scrunch of the captain's feet in the snow died away, and Mulloy said: "He heard you."

The engineer officer shrugged his shoulders. "So what? I meant him to."

Clarke, the navigator, said: "Tact was always your strong point, Hawkins."

"And boot-licking yours, Nobby."

Clarke answered languidly: "For Pete's sake, don't get a complex about me as you have

Tensed for the slightest sound, Farrington heard a sudden scraping noise at the hatch. He jerked round, his heart pounding madly

Inside the plane, they felt a violent jerk. With a tremendous cracking

about Farrington, Hawkins. That would be just too much."

The radio officer asked: "Where's he gone?"

Hawkins said: "Where he always goes, of course. Down to moon round Farrington's Folly. It beats me what he thinks he can do. I reckon he gets down on his knees and prays the thing won't move."

Braybrook, the young first officer, said diffidently: "Captain Farrington is only——"

"The world's original Bighead," Hawkins interrupted. "You've said it, Junior."

The first officer's fresh skin flushed. "Captain Farrington did an excellent job," he said. "None of us got a scratch."

"Good thing we were carrying cargo," Hawkins commented. "Any passengers would have been scared stiff. If you want to thank anything, thank the reversible pitch propellers on the Astroliner. Without their braking action we'd have been over the edge, Junior, my boy."

Braybrook made a self-conscious attempt to stand on his dignity. "I don't like being called Junior by an engineer officer. However senior he is."

Hawkins nearly choked into his beer. Mulloy said quickly: "It's bad enough having to hang around waiting for the engineers and their precious equipment to drag out the aircraft. Can't we have a rest from this eternal arguing?"

Hawkins simmered down. He grunted: "Not much longer, anyway. Met. say they'll be able to take off by tomorrow morning. About time, too. Five days' dense fog. That must be a record, even for Gander."

"Let's hope it's not too late," was Clarke's comment.

"Of course it'll be too late," Hawkins said. "Farrington's ice wall won't hold, once the thaw sets in."

"The skipper told me he had a scheme to save her," Braybrook said. "He didn't say what it was—just said he had a scheme. There was quite a bit of risk. But it might work."

Hawkins laughed. "He hasn't a chance in hell of saving her. Those toy tractors couldn't hold even a Dakota."

"We'll see."

"I hope it succeeds," Mulloy murmured. "Whatever it is. He's worried sick."

HAWKINS sneered. "Worried? Of course he's worried. Now, they only have to jack Dog Zebra up, lock the undercarriage down, put new props on the inboards, and they can fly her out for repairs in the hangars at Gander. Maybe cost the company three thousand pounds. When the thaw comes, and half a million pounds slips into the lake, it's not going to be so funny. Not for Farrington."

Mulloy said gently: "The skipper did a wonderful job, getting us down at all." He was the only one who had seen the quiet agony in Farrington's eyes, when he handed him the unexpected messages as they came over the radio. Past the point of no return, westbound from London to Gander, they had suddenly been sent forecasts of winds of over a hundred knots, dead on the nose. And one by one, all the destinations and alternative aerodromes had snuffed out like candles.

Sydney—heavy continuous snow, visibility nil. Stephenville—visibility fifty yards. Gander, Torbay, Argentia—all answered with monotonous unanimity, visibility nil.

Arriving two hours late over Gander, they had only enough petrol to reach Gulfrange, in the north-west corner of Newfoundland. And there it was snowing, and the visibility was poor.

Farrington had tried to stop on the short, slippery runway that ended with the drop into the lake, but they skidded on. It was only when he pulled the undercarriage up that they managed to come to a standstill just in time.

"The trouble with old Hawkins," Clarke said impersonally, "is that in his opinion, Farrington fixed him with the company. Lost him two years' seniority. *And* it wasn't his fault."

Hawkins started to say: "Not only that——" but Clarke cut him short. "All right, all right. You've told us fifty times already. And I still reckon you got what you deserved."

"Just like you, Clarke, to think that. Absolutely typical. Just wait till the inquiry into this little lot. Just watch Farrington think out something to fix it on us. But this time it's my turn to fix *him*. He came in too fast and too high."

"It's possible," Mulloy agreed placidly. "But under the circumstances nobody could blame him. He had a lot of ice on his wings, and the visibility was wicked."

"According to the book, he should have been able to stop, He didn't, and the court of inquiry will want to know why. I was watching the altimeter and the air speed when Junior reported passing the threshold lights. Fifteen knots too fast. And far too high. Farrington's fault. Pilot error."

Clarke sat up and looked across at the engineer. "You'd say that?"

"Of course I would. There's a can to be carried. And I'm not going to carry it, like last time."

Mulloy said: "You've been longing to get this dig into the skipper, haven't you, Hawkins?"

"Captain Farrington put up a good show," Braybrook put in. His voice had a dutiful monotony about it.

Hawkins turned on him irritably. "All right, Junior. Take it as read that we all recognize you're a true-blue first officer. No need for these expressions of loyalty. We know, we know, we know."

Mulloy's patience suddenly snapped. "Cut it

sound and a shriek of metal on ice, the giant aircraft began to slide forward

out, Hawkins. You've done nothing but make trouble ever since we've been here."

Clarke laughed. "Even Mulloy getting worked up now."

"I'm sorry," Mulloy said. "The trouble is, we just sit around and we can't do anything."

"If you want something to do, you can take your last look at Dog Zebra." Hawkins had suddenly become positively genial. He went over to the window and opened it. "It's getting dark, but you can still see her."

He put his hand out into the porridge-coloured air. "And it's warmer. *Much* warmer. Look at that stuff over there, sonny boy. It's sweating a little."

Braybrook peered out at the little drops of water glistening on the snow. In the half-light beyond, he could see a small black figure moving beside Dog Zebra's towering tail.

"Farrington's still fussing round her like an old hen," Hawkins said. "I bet he's noticed it's getting warmer, too. I want to be around to see his face when Dog Zebra takes her cold bath. The man who lost half a million. I hope, I hope, I hope."

The lonely figure paused by the starboard wing of the aircraft, and looked out into the sky towards the west. The lake was filled with a grey mist that was gradually darkening, but there were rifts of light in the overcast near the horizon, where the weak winter sun was setting.

The wind had increased. But it was still a warm wind from the south-west.

Captain Farrington turned wistfully towards the north. A cold, continuous blast from the Arctic, that's what was needed most now. Not these millions of above-freezing molecules that were moving like an army of locusts to eat into the ice and snow that held Dog Zebra back from the waters of Gulfrange Lake. He shivered a little, though his body was warm enough. Taking three steps towards the rear hatch, he slipped, and his left leg plunged up to the knee in soft white suds of snow. The surface stuff was beginning to melt already.

He felt a pang of weary hopelessness attack his disciplined heart. He had a plan—two, in fact, one germinating from the other. But they were both born of complete desperation, and the chances of success were slender. It was doubtful if the risk was worth taking. And yet, there was nothing else he could do.

A cold realist, unhampered normally by sympathy either for himself or other people, he had no illusions that the broken aircraft was anything but a huge symbol of failure. No matter how hard he worked now, he could never hope to make amends for losing an Astroliner. Remembering his many flying hours with their own peculiar joys and troubles, that thought hurt his pride and made a mockery of his self-respect.

He struggled wearily to the back of the aircraft, and for the twentieth time inspected the wire ropes on the towing points. They were quite firm. The little tractors looked as though they would dearly love to be released from this hopeless dead weight behind them and scuttle off to safety. Their drivers had already expressed their unwillingness to man them.

"When she goes, she'll go suddenly," they had said. "Tractors, tow-ropes and all. We wouldn't stand a chance."

And yet, as he made up his mind to put his scheme into operation, he thought wryly that the risk he himself would have to take would be a hundred times as great.

Darkness was falling quickly. Farrington walked down the deserted runway to the tower and climbed up the stairs to the control-room.

"The snow's melting," he said to the airport controller. His voice sounded quite gentle and resigned. What's forecast for the morning?"

"Twenty degrees above freezing."

Farrington closed his bloodshot eyes for a second. Then he said quietly: "I have a plan. It's a risk, but I think it's worth taking. Tell the bowsers to go and put five hundred gallons of petrol into each of the outboard tanks."

The controller looked at him as though he had suddenly gone out of his mind. "But that'll make the aircraft heavier than ever. Even more certain to slide. How can that help, Captain?"

"I've got to hold her where she is till the aircraft with the bulldozers arrive from Gander."

The controller clucked with impatience. "We all realize that, Captain. But what good will fuel in the tanks be to you, when the aircraft's on its belly?"

Farrington took no notice of him. "You've got two-way radio communication in your caravan, haven't you? Well, I want it moved up beside the aircraft. And I want twenty men standing by with picks and shovels. Could you organize that for me?"

"Of course, Captain. But what's the point of it all?"

Farrington looked at the man. He could see that already the controller had given up the ghost of Dog Zebra. Then he said dryly: "I've told you all I want the station staff to do. My plan may work. It may not. That's my worry."

The crew gathered round the stove in the Nissen hut as Farrington explained his scheme. "First of all, I want two of you to man the tractors. I warn you, there's a risk of injury if you have to jump off suddenly."

"I'll take one," Clarke volunteered promptly.

"And I'll have the other one, sir," the radio officer said.

"Thanks, Mr. Clarke. But I want you, Mr. Mulloy, to take over the caravan and give me a

Continued on page 32

Coroner Purchase seeks the truth about sudden death

by DENNIS HOLMAN

"I am not concerned with morals," says Bentley Purchase—but he is suspicious of almost everything. And he has often uncovered the murder that looked like suicide

RECENTLY A SUDDEN DEATH was reported to William Bentley Purchase, Coroner of St. Pancras, London. A young woman had broken her neck in unusual circumstances, having fallen while trying to scale the drainpipe to her bedroom window. When questioned, a man living in the same house admitted he had been coaching her to become a cat burglar.

"It seemed quite as likely that the coach had pushed her out of the window," says Coroner Purchase, "and I ordered a detailed investigation. He was cleared by a milk bottle. This stood on the rain-washed window sill, where it certainly would have been in the way of any possible struggle. Under the bottle was a dry, dusty circle, indicating that the bottle had stood there for at least twenty-four hours."

More often than not, however, the coroner's suspicions have been justified. Some years ago he received a police report on a fire in Hawley Crescent, where the charred body of a man was found in a chair; the police contended that the fire and the death were both accidental.

"People don't usually sit down in a burning building," Purchase says. "One of my officers and I went and turned the body over. In the back we found a neat bullet hole."

The killer, named Furnace, was later arrested in Southend, brought back to London, and charged with murder. In the lock-up that night he asked for his raincoat, as he said he was feeling cold. The warder handed it to him. In the lining was a bottle of hydrochloric acid, which Furnace drank: he died painfully.

It is part of Purchase's job to see that murder is never covered under the cloak of accident, suicide, or natural causes. Every sudden or suspicious death, every death in hospital within twenty-four hours of admission, and every death on an operating table, is a coroner's business.

One afternoon during the London blitz Purchase was told of a young woman reported killed. One seemingly unimportant fact caused Purchase to order a post-mortem on the girl. In a statement made by her sister he noted that they were land girls from Somerset.

"I wasn't prepared to believe they had come all that way to do shopping, which was the reason given for the visit to London," says Purchase. "As I suspected, the post-mortem revealed that the girl had died during an illegal operation. After questioning the sister we obtained the name of the woman who had performed the operation and had tried to pass the body off as a casualty. She was later convicted of manslaughter."

Coroner Purchase is a tall, vigorous man of sixty-two, who goes ski-ing in Switzerland every winter. Bluff and outspoken, he is qualified in medicine and law. With more than thirty years' experience of coroners' work in some of the most fashionable and the seamiest parts of London, he has learned much about death through accident, suicide and crime.

Over the years, the ticketed exhibits for inquests have accumulated in his office; they are stored in the event of any case having to be reopened. There are weapons of all kinds, empty barbiturate, aspirin and cyanide bottles, syringes, razors. There is a suicide note scribbled with soap on a mirror; a wire flex that accidentally strangled a man as he fell; an electric fire that electrocuted a woman in her bath. In the original cardboard boxes are the three small skeletons that a barmaid had taken about with her for years, until she left one box in a lodging-house and the whole story of infanticide came out.

Has Private Police Force

Purchase is assisted by his officers, police constables Alf Lister, Glyndon May, Tom Day, Arthur Reynolds and Charles Glover, who receive every report of a sudden death in the district and visit the scene. They make their own inquiries and inform Purchase independently of the police. Coroners' officers are trained to be suspicious.

Unless a death occurs in hospital, where post-mortem facilities exist, bodies are brought to Purchase's mortuary and kept until the cause of death is ascertained and a disposal order is issued. It was at St. Pancras mortuary that Sir Bernard Spilsbury performed the autopsy on the remains of Crippen's murdered wife, before giving evidence in the inquest held by Purchase's predecessor, Sir Walter Schröder.

St. Pancras was Spilsbury's favourite mortuary. On the walls of the post-mortem room are still the electric heaters installed by Purchase because of Spilsbury's arthritis. The desk is exactly as it was on the morning the pathologist wrote the notes of his last post-mortem, before going home to gas himself. His instruments are still in daily use.

Tall, dignified and precise, Spilsbury was

Three of Coroner Purchase's own independent investigating staff. Police Constable Alf Lister seeks some information on the phone; at the desk are colleagues Arthur Reynolds and Glyndon May

Coroner Purchase arrives for an inquest. He calls only essential witnesses at his St. Pancras court—and never wastes time. Long-winded coroners, he has said, are the bane of the profession

never amenable to contradiction. He could not abide typewriters. If Purchase wanted a copy of a report, Sir Bernard made it himself in his spidery longhand.

Spilsbury's successor is Dr. Francis Camps, whose brilliant reassembling of the bones found at 10 Rillington Place enabled the police to identify two of John Christie's victims.

Purchase believes that most of the fatal accidents that he has dealt with need not have happened. "Gas and electricity are two potential sources of danger," he says. "Trouble comes when people don't treat them as such."

Last winter, two London business acquaintances were discussing a deal. Because the room was cold one of them lit the gas fire. Half an hour later both were found dead—gassed, because one of the jets was not alight, and the unburnt gas had escaped into the room. A mixture of less than one part gas to five hundred parts air can cause death.

Cat Killed The Burglar

Coal gas is a cumulative poison which builds up a concentration in the blood, preventing the absorption of oxygen in the tissues. It acts quickly, producing a sensation of helplessness which Purchase himself once experienced when he started his car engine in a closed garage. As his knees began to sag he suddenly realized that the air was being poisoned by carbon monoxide from the exhaust. He just managed to open the door, and fell unconscious into the fresh air.

Loose gas taps are dangerous. They can be turned on accidentally by clothing as a person brushes past, and a cold or a bad sense of smell may prevent the victim from realizing what has happened until it is too late. A cat was blamed for the death of a burglar in the act of opening a safe: it was thought that the cat, frightened when the burglar entered the room through the window, jumped on to the tap of the gas fire, turning it on. The cat itself survived by crouching near the door, breathing the fresh air.

There have been accidents through two lodgers sharing a coin meter in a boarding house. "The pattern of events in these cases is almost invariable," says Purchase. "One lodger turns on his tap, but finds that the supply of gas has run out. Without bothering to turn off the tap, he goes to look for a coin. He cannot borrow one, so he goes to bed, forgetting all about the open tap.

Later, the second lodger comes home and puts a coin in the meter, little realizing that gas has begun to escape from the open jet next door. If the neighbour is asleep and does not notice it, he is found next day with his skin coloured a bright pink."

Small children are the most vulnerable to electric shock in the home. "I would be saved many inquests if parents appreciated the risks that face children and took elementary precautions," says Coroner Purchase.

Two out of every three industrial accidents in Purchase's experience have resulted from people taking unnecessary risks. One of the worst he remembers was that of the man transfixed through the back by the pointed axle of a buffing machine which had been allowed to run without a protective covering. The fast-rotating point, threaded like a screw, drew him remorselessly on to it.

Historically, a coroner's job was that of confiscating for the Crown the property of felons; as suicides were felons in law, coroners held an inquiry into the cause of every sudden death to see whether or not there was anything in it for the king.

The reasons for a coroner's function have changed, but suicide remains one of the largest single causes of violent death. Almost invariably there is a strong emotional motive behind a suicide's final act, but Purchase believes that some have died on an impulse of self-destruction which momentarily proved irresistible.

In an Islington slaughter-house, men work with long, razor-sharp machetes. During a discussion on technique, one of the gang suddenly said, "This is the way to do it!" With that he held up his head and slashed his throat.

Dragged From Gas Oven

Most people who commit suicide die in the early hours, when a man who has lost faith in himself is most depressed, when living is least attractive to tired and sick old people, when insomnia sufferers, desperately in need of sleep, reach the state of mind where they take an overdose of sleeping tablets.

One morning, a letter was received in Purchase's office. "I was out, and May opened the letter," says Purchase. "It was from a key witness in a very serious case, and it began, 'Dear Sir, by the time you read this I will be dead. . . .'

"May immediately rang the police. A squad car was at the man's house within a few minutes. He was dragged away from his gas oven unconscious, revived, and brought next day to the inquest, in which he gave evidence."

By the time a case reaches his court, Purchase has acquired a fairly detailed knowledge of the facts from the reports of his officers. All he requires is to get the evidence on oath, and his inquests are swift and workmanlike. Only essential witnesses are called—he avoids calling lately bereaved widows and young mothers if their evidence can be dispensed with, and the questions he asks are only those necessary to establish the exact cause of death. A pathologist describes the results of the post-mortem, and Purchase gives his verdict after a brief and lucid summing-up. Juries are used only in inquests on traffic, railway, aircraft and industrial accidents, and on deaths for which a criminal charge may be made.

Secrets Locked In File

"Long-winded coroners are the bane of the profession," says Purchase. Coroners have the same powers of contempt and free utterance in court as a High Court judge, and Purchase can say what he likes about the London County Council, which appointed him and pays him £2,400 a year, without fear of being removed; but all the public hears at St. Pancras is evidence of how the subject died.

The story behind the death, often sensational, is locked in the file. "I am not concerned with morals," Purchase says.

Only one of his stories has a happy ending. One of his officers, Alf Lister, received a phone call from a doctor who said he had been called out on a case to find the patient dead. Lister went to view the body. Then he came back and made his report to Purchase.

"I was shown upstairs, where the body of an old woman lay on the bed," he said. "A lamp threw her shadow on the wall. I was looking at it while listening to a relative's account of what had happened, when I noticed the shadow rising and falling. A moment later the woman gave a snort. She was alive. 'I'll call the doctor,' I told the relative. 'I'm not the man you want—at least not yet.'" THE END

THE STRANGE LAND

Continued from page 14

notes I had given his son and held them out to me.

"My son is not to be paid for bringing his father to you, *sidi*," he said.

I insisted that he should return the money to the boy, and then Julie brought the coffee I had asked her to make and we talked. His name was Moha and he was the chief of a small village at this end of the *palmerie*. He was a man of some substance, with fifty goats and more than a hundred palm trees, and he had a daughter married to the son of the Khalifa, the Sultan's representative at Foum-Skhira. He talked about the failure of the date harvest and how a year ago French experts had examined the trees and then a machine like a bird had arrived and covered the date palms with smoke.

"And didn't it do any good?" I asked.

"*Insh'Allah!*" He shrugged his shoulders and smiled. But the smile didn't extend to his hard, grey eyes. "The French officer has told us that it is the only hope for the trees, and we believe him because he is wise and like a father to us. But this year I have no dates, *sidi*. No man is sure any more."

It was a perfect situation for a man like Ali to exploit. I asked him if he knew that the Caid's son had returned to Foum-Skhira. He nodded and I was conscious of a stillness about him, a sudden wariness. His eyes were hooded by the pale lids, and the curved predatory beak of his nose made him look like an old hawk.

"Do you know why he has returned?" I asked. But he didn't answer. He had finished his third cup of coffee and, according to Berber etiquette, he would take his leave. "You are a friend of Caid Hassan," I said.

He nodded, gathering his *djellaba* about him.

"We wish to see him tonight. It is important. Will you take us to him?"

"He is a sick man, *sidi*."

"I know. But we must see him."

"Tomorrow, perhaps."

"No," I said. "It must be tonight. At least guide us as far as the *kasbah*."

He stared at me, his eyes narrowed slightly. Then he shook his head. "He is sick," he repeated.

Jan got up then. "Ask him," he said, "whether he was here when Lieutenant Duprez drank tea with Caid Hassan between the lines."

The Berber's eyes lit up suddenly as I asked him the question.

"*Iyyeh, sidi*. I was there."

I TOLD him then that Jan had been Duprez's friend, that he had been with him when he died, and he stared at Jan, smiling and bowing as though greeting him for the first time. "He has a message for Caid Hassan from Capitaine Duprez," I added. "It is important."

He got to his feet then. "Very well." He nodded. "I will take you to Caid Hassan."

I opened the door for him and he stepped out into the night. Jan followed him. Julie caught hold of my arm.

"Be careful, Philip," she said softly. "Please be careful. This place isn't like the mountain villages round Enfida."

I smiled at her, and she picked up the coffee things and went through into the kitchenette.

I stepped down to the ground and closed the door. The little world of the caravan seemed suddenly small and remote, an oasis of light in the desert of darkness that surrounded it. The sky was clear and the bright starlight showed us the shape of the mountains crouched above the camp. The sound of White's bulldozer came down to us from the gorge. There was no wind, but already the air was cold.

We followed the *piste* down until, looking over my shoulder, the bus was no more than a yellow pinpoint of light in the immense black shadow of the mountains. Then we entered the *palmerie* and the trees hid even that small indication of human existence. We were alone in a cold, alien world.

Finally we came out on to the bank of a deep irrigation ditch. We followed the glimmering white of Moha's *djellaba* through a world of almost complete blackness.

We came to a bridge of palm trunks spanning the ditch, and there our guide told us to wait while he went into his village. We could hear him beating on the wooden door of his house and there was a dog barking. Then there was silence again.

"I suppose you've got the deeds with you?" Though I kept my voice to a whisper, the sound of it seemed loud.

"Yes," Jan said. "And Marcel's letter."

I didn't say anything. The only documents establishing his claim to Kasbah Foum were on him at this moment. If the guide sent a runner on ahead of us. . . . If Ali knew. . . . I felt a shiver run down my spine.

A shadow moved in the darkness. It was our guide, the white of his *djellaba* almost hidden by the blanket he had wrapped round himself. He led us on along the top of the ditch without a word and soon we caught the faint beat of tam-tams far ahead. The sound was a guide to our progress, and as we neared Ksar Foum-Skhira the harsh, lilting chant of the singers joined the rhythmic beating of the drums.

WE reached a well with its pole uplifted against the stars and then we were on a beaten track with walls on either side. And when we came out into the open again, the noise of the tam-tams and the singing was suddenly very loud: *Aiee-ya, Aiee-ya, Aiee-yaiee-ya*.

We were close under the walls of Ksar Foum-Skhira now, and there were people about. I breathed a sigh of relief.

We crossed an open space and ahead of us, on a slight rise, the darker bulk of the *kasbah* showed in the darkness. We passed through the arched gateway of an outer wall, crossed an open courtyard of sand and came to the main entrance, barred by a wooden door. Our guide beat upon the door, and presently a light showed through a crack. The wooden securing bar was lifted and the door was pulled back with a creak of hinges.

A swarthy, bearded man, his head swathed in a turban, stared at us suspiciously. He carried a carbide lamp in his hand—a metal container with a long spout rising from it, at the end of which was a two-inch jet of flame that wavered in the draught.

Our guide announced us, and for a few moments the thick, guttural sounds of the Arab dialect were tossed back and forth between them.

"My companion," I said, indicating Jan, "was a friend of Capitaine Duprez. He has a message for Caid Hassan."

A turbaned porter held the flame high so that he could see us. The light gleamed on his brown, inquisitive eyes. Then he nodded and stood aside for us to enter. The door closed behind us, the wooden securing bar was dropped into place and, with a quick little gesture that was part welcome and part a request to follow him, the keeper of the gate led us into the black cavern of a passageway.

From nails on the wall he took two more carbide lights. The place was like an underground tunnel, dank and chill, with walls and roof of mud, so that it looked as though it had been hewn out of the earth.

We turned off into another passageway. A yellow gleam of light showed at the end of it. It was the entrance to a room and, as we went by, I saw the glow of a brazier and figures huddled round it. The only lights were the carbide flames flickering from their wall hooks. Steps led upwards then—a staircase that followed the square walls of a tower. And suddenly we were out in the open on a roof top.

CROSSING the roof, we entered the open doorway of another tower. There was a shallow flight of earthen stairs, then we were in a square room with two thick window embrasures, the small, square openings of which were closed by broken wooden shutters. The place was very cold and had a musty smell. It was completely bare. The floor was of hard-packed earth and the walls of dried mud. The ceiling was high, raftered with soft wood of palm stems.

The man who had brought us here lit the two carbide lamps, hung them on hooks provided in the walls and then left us without a word, taking our guide with him.

It was bitterly cold. The temperature was just on freezing and a little wind was driving in through the cracks in the shutters and the carbide flames flickered wildly.

In a few moments, attendants came into the room, their arms piled with cushions and silks and hand-woven rugs. A big square of carpet was spread out on the earthen floor; the cushions were arranged round it and draped with rugs and silks. A brazier was brought, a red glow of warmth, and stood in the corner. A copper kettle was set on it. A great silver tray was placed on a low table that was barely six inches from the ground and a silver tea chest and white cone of sugar were placed beside it.

One of the men who had carried these things up was Moha, and I reminded him that we were relying upon him to guide us back. He nodded and disappeared with the rest of the men. The room was suddenly empty again. We sat down cross-legged on the cushions and waited.

The minutes ticked slowly by, but at last there was movement again nearby. An old man entered, walking slowly.

He wore a spotlessly white *djellaba* of soft wool, the hood neatly arranged to frame his features. His beard was white and rather sparse, cut like a goatee, but extending along the line of the jaw almost to the ears. His skin was pale, far paler than mine, and his eyes were steely blue. He was of pure Berber stock, unmixed with Arab or any of the desert races that so dilute the Berber blood of the south.

"*Merhba bikum!*" His gesture of greeting had great dignity. He motioned us to sit and himself sank on

Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

GYMNASTICS were Alan's favourite lesson at school. There were about twenty boys in his class who were allowed to use the vaulting horse without supervision; Alan, aged eleven, was the youngest. Mr. Stubbs, the gym master, found that forty youngsters at a time in the gymnasium gave him plenty to do without watching everybody.

When the boys used the vaulting horse the strict rule was that as each leaped over, he must wait to help the next jumper if necessary. This rule was usually closely followed, and it had been the practice in this school and others for many years.

One Wednesday afternoon, Alan was jumping the horse with the others. Mr. Stubbs was occupied with another group at the other side of the gym.

Brown had just vaulted, and was standing by the horse waiting for Alan when the bell rang for the end of the day's school. Brown reacted immediately; as Alan was in mid-air, he bolted for the door.

Something went wrong with Alan's jump, and his foot caught the top of the horse. He fell to the floor with a crash, and broke his collar bone.

On Alan's behalf, the school authorities were sued for damages. It was alleged that they had been negligent to permit such activities without the close supervision of an adult—who should have stood where Brown had been. "A vaulting horse can be quite dangerous," said Alan's representative, "and a small boy of Brown's age should not be allowed to control its use; he is not competent to do so."

In defence, the school authorities proved that they had followed a long-established practice. They said that it would be quite impracticable to have enough masters to supervise the gym activities of every boy, or group. Also, they showed that this was the first time such an accident had happened for many years.

What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 28

'See how they put the squiggles on Cadburys Milk Tray'

A young married couple on a visit to Cadburys Factory in a Garden can find much to admire: she—the fascinating business of ingredients and flavours; he—the machinery and the manual skill. But Mr. and Mrs. Carter saw much more than this. Instead of the usual grime and smoke of industry, they saw gardens full of flowers, tree-shaded walks, wide playing fields.

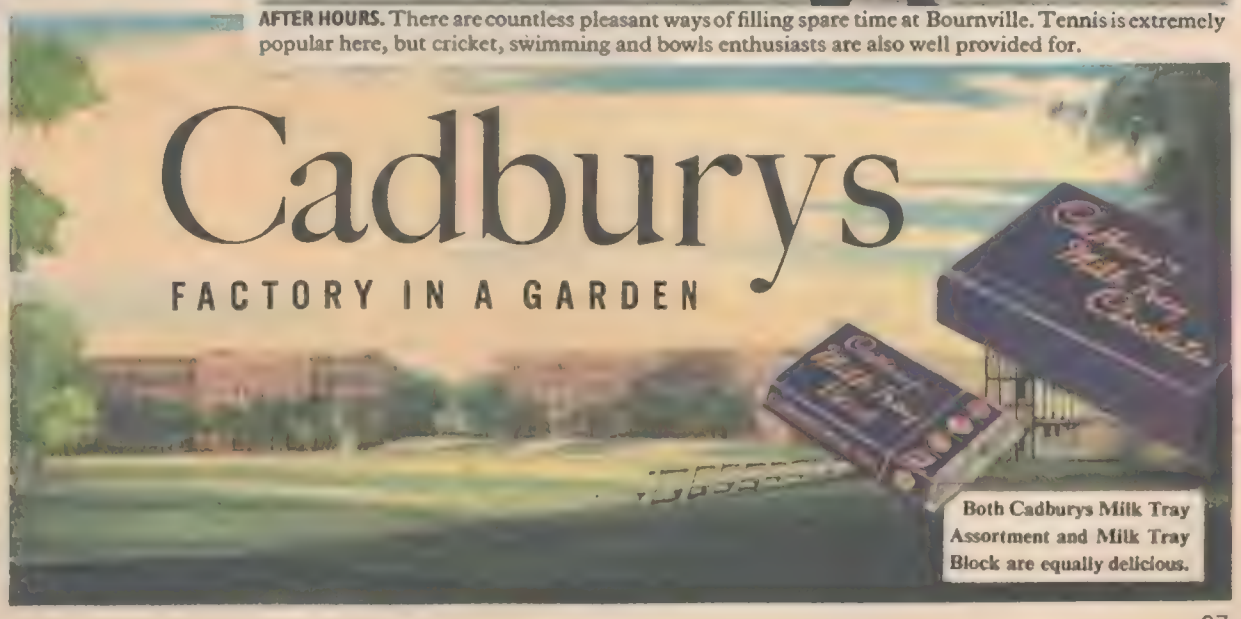
ROASTED HAZELNUTS AND CARAMEL are ground to a smooth paste—*noisette*. If there is any more flavour to be released, this process does it.

A QUIET CORNER. The visitors enjoy a saunter through the gardens. It's so restful here by the lily pond. The grounds provide many a quiet and pleasant walk for the lunch break or a sunny summer's evening.

THE HUMAN TOUCH. Here is something no machine can do. The Quality Control Committee–like tea-tasters–use their 'educated' palates to keep quality up to standard.

AFTER HOURS. There are countless pleasant ways of filling spare time at Bournville. Tennis is extremely popular here, but cricket, swimming and bowls enthusiasts are also well provided for.

THE END OF THE LINE. Sorted, packed and soon ready for despatch. Ahead—a journey all over the world to all those people who are always saying '*I want Cadburys*'.



More people drink

WATNEY'S

than any other

BROWN

ALE

to a cushion, folding up neatly and gracefully despite his age. Summoning one of the two men who had entered with him, he bade him make the tea for his guests, at the same time apologizing to us in French for not doing it himself. He then made us a little speech of welcome in a frail voice that only occasionally paused to search for the right word.

"You should have given warning that you were coming to visit me," he finished reproachfully. "I would have arranged a *dîfa* for you."

"It is very kind of you," I replied. "But things are difficult for you now."

"It should still be possible to entertain guests as I would wish." He paused and then said, "You were with Capitaine Legard this morning?"

I nodded.

"Did he say when the food would arrive for my people?"

I explained about the two trucks that had broken down.

"Yes, yes, I know," he said. "But why does he have to go to Agdz? Is he gone to bring the food here?"

I couldn't tell him that Legard had gone to Agdz because of us. "Yes," I said, "he has gone to bring the food trucks."

"Good. But he must come soon. The people lose so much of their supplies in the disaster." He said this to himself rather than to us, nodding his head slightly. His age showed then, for he looked suddenly peevish and irritable.

"They'll be here tomorrow, I expect," I said.

He shrugged. "*Insh'Allah!*"

"I believe your son is here in Foum-Skhira?" I said.

"My eldest son, you mean—Ali?" He nodded. "*Oui.* There is dancing in his honour in Ksar Foum-Skhira tonight. You know him, perhaps?" His eyes had clouded.

"Yes, I met him in Tangier."

The pale lids closed almost wearily. In those dropped lids I saw suddenly a similarity between the son and his father. He sighed and changed the subject, talking about the rains and how the *souk*, the market, had been destroyed. And then the tea was made, and we drank.

"*Alors,*" the Caid said, "you say that you are friends of the Capitaine Duprez."

BRIEFLY, I explained that it was Jan who was Duprez's friend and that he had been with him when he died. The old man nodded and motioned the men, standing like shadows in the doorway, to withdraw. Only the man seated behind the silver-laden tea tray remained. He was small-bodied with a cast in one eye, but he had the old man's features and he was called Hassan, so that I presumed he was one of the Caid's sons.

"Now," the Caid said. "You have come to talk with me about Kasbah Foum, eh?"

I nodded to Jan to go ahead, and he told him how he had met Duprez, how they had worked together against the Germans in Essen and how Duprez had died there.

The old Caid shook his head and sighed. "It is a sad end for him," he said.

"He was serving France," Jan pointed out.

"*Mais oui.* He always served France. He was a Frenchman. But he should have died here. This was his home and my people were his people also. He was a fine man."

The man behind the tea table rose and gave us more tea. "It is many years ago, then, that Monsieur le Capitaine died." There was a hard shrewdness in the old man's eyes as he stared at Jan. "Why is it only now that you come to tell me how it happened?"

Jan tried to explain why he had not come before, what his life had been since the war, but it was clear that the Caid didn't really understand. He was not ignorant of the world beyond Foum-Skhira, but to him it was a French world. The complications of other European powers were largely outside his knowledge. "I think," he said, "that you have come because the tall, fair man from America with the big machines is arrived to work at Kasbah Foum."

"No," Jan said. "I came because I had to. I did not know about the American." He produced the battered envelope and another, smaller envelope containing the letter from Duprez to Caid Hassan. The Caid waved it aside.

"I have been told," he said, "that you are not the man to whom Capitaine Duprez handed the papers. It has been suggested that you killed the man to whom he gave them. First, before I see the letter Capitaine Duprez wrote to me, you must give proof that you are in reality the man who was with my friend when he died."

"How can I do that?" Jan asked. "What can I tell you that will prove it to you?"

The old man thought for a moment. "Tell me first exactly how he looked and what he told you of his talks with me."

FOR several minutes Jan talked telling him about Marcel Duprez, what Duprez had told him about the Caid, about Foum-Skhira, about the Berbers and the country of the south. He was still talking when there was a disturbance at the foot of the stairs below the room where we were seated. Several men were talking, quickly, angrily, in Berber, and then there was the light patter of sandals on earthen stairway.

The Caid turned his head towards the entrance, his forehead contracted in a frown.

The footsteps ceased. The figure of a man stood in the doorway. His face was hidden in the hood of his *djellaba*, but his eyes caught the light of the carbide flames and glinted, as did the curved silver knife at his waist: the eyes and the knife were all that was visible of him.

"*Skun ya?*" the Caid demanded.

"Ali." And the man stepped forward into the light, his head and body only slightly bowed in respect for his father.

"Why do you disturb me? Can you not see that I have guests?" The Caid's voice quavered slightly.

"It is because you have guests that I have come," Ali d'Es-Skhira answered. He had moved to his father's side, towering over the old man, who seemed suddenly shrunken and much older.

"Where have you been? What trouble have you been stirring up among the people?" The old man's voice sounded frail and peevish. And when Ali did not answer, he said to him, "Go. I will talk with you later."

But Ali did not move. Tangier and his own rebellious nature seemed to have destroyed all the respect and obedience due from a Berber son to his father. He pointed to us and said, "These men come like thieves in the night, O *sidi*, to steal from us the wealth of Kasbah Foum." He was still speaking in the Arab dialect and his voice throbbed with violence. "They are evil men, and your people have need of their share of the wealth the foreigner may find in the gorge. Do not be deceived by them. They are thieves."

"We are not thieves." I answered him in his own tongue, and his eyes blazed at me in the flickering light as he realized that I had understood.

"You thought that my friend was the man you had employed to purchase the deeds to Kasbah Foum," I

Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 26, the judge found that this practice had been successfully followed for many years; he added that one misfortune did not brand it with the stamp of negligence. The test was: "What is reasonable care in everyday affairs?" The school had taken reasonable care in the gym, and Alan lost his case. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases.*)

"No, darling, you mustn't—they're so bad for you"

continued. "But this afternoon, when you came to the gorge, you realized that he was not that man, but the true friend of Capitaine Duprez. That is why you have come here now in haste—because you are afraid that your father will discover the truth. It is you, Si Ali, who are the liar and the thief."

He took a step forward, his sudden indrawn breath sounding loud in the stillness of the room. "It is the talk of a man who is not sure of himself, *sidi*," he said to his father, and gave a quick laugh.

Caid Hassan's eyes were closed, his body relaxed as though trying to gather energy together inside himself. At length he turned to Jan and opened his eyes.

"You have told me much that has convinced me," he said, speaking in French again. "*Alors, monsieur*, one final thing. Did my friend tell you how it happened that I gave him Kasbah Foum?"

"*Oui*," Jan said.

"Then tell me the whole story, and I shall be convinced."

"You took tea with him in the middle of the battle," Jan said. "It was then that you first learned of his interest in Kasbah Foum and the ruined city." The old man nodded and Jan continued.

It had been in the spring of 1934, at the very end of the pacification. The tribes of the district of Foum-Skhira were particularly warlike. Their resistance under Caid Hassan had been stubborn and the fighting had dragged on. Marcel Duprez, then a lieutenant, was among the French forces. He had been an officer of the *Affaires Indigènes* in Algeria, and four years before he had come in alone from the desert to prepare the way for the pacification and persuade the tribes that resistance would be pointless. He knew them all.

One afternoon, when both sides had withdrawn after a day of particularly savage fighting, he had calmly walked out into the No Man's Land between the two forces, accompanied by two legionnaires. They were unarmed and all they carried was the paraphernalia for making tea.

He had set his brazier down midway between the two forces and after quietly performing the ceremony of making the tea, had called upon Hassan and his chiefs to come and drink it with him. And they had come, knowing the officer and admiring his bravery. Over the tea table he had persuaded the Caid and his chiefs that the French must win in the end and that there was no point in continuing the fight.

As the sun was setting, terms were agreed, but for the sake of his young warriors' pride, Caid Hassan had insisted on continuing the battle for one more day, though it was decided that the fighting should not be pressed by either side. All next day the two forces fired at each other with a great deal of noise, but little loss of life. And in the evening Hassan had come to capitulate.

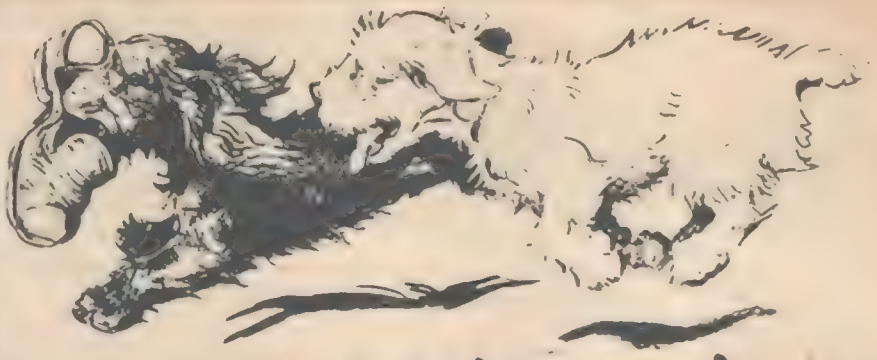
JAN continued: "You were taken to the tent of the general commanding the legionnaires, but said you would only surrender to the officer who had come out and served tea to you. They told you that Marcel Duprez had been wounded in the day's fighting. When you heard this, you insisted on being taken to the hospital tent where he lay, and there, with the general looking on, you surrendered to Lieutenant Duprez."

Jan stopped there and stared at the Caid. "That is how Marcel told it to me. It was because of his interest in the place and his plans that you gave him Kasbah Foum. Also, he loved your people."

There was silence, and then the Caid held out his hand to Jan. "Give me the letter Capitaine Duprez wrote."

Jan handed him the letter. Lights were brought and placed at the Caid's feet and, while he bent forward to read the letter, tea was brought for the third time. The old man held the letter in such a way that his son, leaning down over his shoulder, could not read it, and when he had finished it, he folded it up and slipped it inside his *djellaba*.

"This is not a simple matter," he said, speaking slowly in French. "There is an old belief that silver was once mined at Kasbah Foum, and that belief has revived because of this American. I had hoped that it would be Capitaine Duprez who developed that place. He would have used it for



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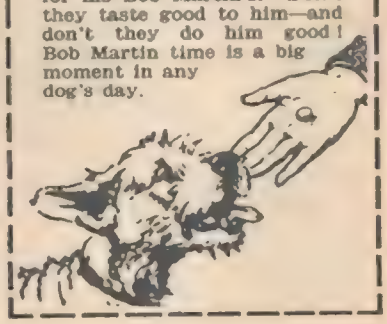

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the benefit of the people here. He had plans for hospitals and schools. But now he is dead and you are here. How do I know I can trust you?"

Jan's eyes were steady as they met the old man's gaze. "I have come to live here," he said quietly. "Morocco is my home now. I have no home anywhere else in the world." He leaned forward slightly, a note of earnestness in his voice. "If there is wealth at Kasbah Foum, it shall be developed for the benefit of the people here. That is what I promised Marcel, and I shall keep my promise."

He had spoken seriously and with force. The old man nodded. But he was still uncertain. "What you say may be the truth at this moment," he said. "But a man easily changes his mind when his roots are not deep in the soil of his promise."

"I have come to live here," Jan repeated. "Morocco is my country now."

The Caid glanced up at his son and then stared at Jan. It was as though he were weighing the two men up in his mind. There was a long silence. Finally he said: "Allah be my guide in this. It shall be as Capitaine Duprez wished it. I will give you——"

"No." Ali's hand descended on his father's shoulder, gripping hold of it, digging his powerful fingers into the old flesh. "These men are strangers. They want the silver—nothing more. They must not have it. They do not love our people."

"I do not believe it," the old man said, trying vainly to pluck his son's hand from his shoulder.

"Do this thing," Ali added, "and as Allah is my witness, there will be trouble among the people."

I STARED at the scene with a sense of shock, scarcely able to believe that this was a son speaking to his father. In strict Berber etiquette the man should be as a child in the presence of his father, even to the point of making a request through an intermediary. Yet Ali's manner was openly hostile, even contemptuous. For some time, the two men—father and son—stared at each other.

Finally the Caid gave a little sigh and his eyes, as they turned away, had the vacancy of the very old; it was as though they looked beyond the flickering walls, back through the dim vistas of the past. Slowly he pulled himself to his feet. Ali made no move to help him. "My father is tired," he said in French. "I must ask you to leave and permit him to rest."

We waited for the Caid to speak. He stood there a long time, staring into vacancy. And all he said in the end was: "Yes, I am tired now. We will talk of this some other day."

Jan started to say something, but Ali silenced him with a gesture. He took his father's arm and led him out. The Caid did not protest. But he paused in the doorway and looked back. His eyes were fastened on Jan. And suddenly they weren't vacant any more. They were intensely alive, as though he were examining Jan's features for a sign by which he could come to a decision.

"*Barak Allaho fik!*" he murmured. "Allah bless you!" His voice was gentle, like a monk saying a benediction. And then he was gone.

They brought lights and escorted us down the narrow stairs, across the open space of the roof top and into the bowels of the *kasbah*. A hand gripped my arm in the half dark. "I don't like it," Jan whispered. "Ali is in control here."

His words echoed my own thoughts. We were in the dark tunnel of the entrance passage now. It was intensely cold and I tried to convince myself that that was why I was trembling. We passed the rectangular gap lit by the red glow of the brazier. Figures were huddled around it, as they had been when we arrived. They did not seem to have moved. It was just a brief glimpse and then the carbide flames were flickering on blank walls again, silhouetting the cowled, shadowy figures round us.

With a sense of relief I heard the scrape of the securing bar, the creak of the heavy wooden door. There was a rush of fresh air, murmur of polite farewells, and we were out in the cold, bright glitter of the star-studded night.

I turned, surprised that we were, in fact, outside the *kasbah*. For a moment the carbide flares lit the passageway and the swarthy aquiline faces of our escorts, framed in the cowls of their *djellabas*. They were outlined for an instant, motionless like a tableau, and then the door thudded to and we were alone. It was only then, while the wooden bar was being dropped into place, that I realized we had been shown out without our guide.

Jan had noticed it, too. "Where's Moha?" he asked. His voice was a hoarse whisper. "Do you think . . ." He didn't finish the sentence, but I saw his hand reach into his breast pocket to make sure he still had the deeds there. "Do you remember the way back?" he asked.

"I think I can find it," I said. We had started to walk across the courtyard. We reached the archway and there ahead of us was the dark towered shape of Ksar Foum-Skhira. There was no singing now. The village seemed as quiet as the grave. We came to the first of the wells and then we were under the shadow of the walls.

WE stopped there as though by mutual consent and stood listening. There was no breath of wind and in the stillness my ears picked up small sounds—the grunt of a camel, the cry of a child: sounds that were innocent and yet, because they were not of our own world, disconcerting.

"Do we have to go back through the *palmerie*?" Jan said. "Couldn't we cut across towards the Post and get on to the *piste*?"

The thought had been in my own mind, too. We both of us felt the need for open country round us. "All right," I said, and we turned back, skirting the walls of Ksar Foum-Skhira, moving slowly, feeling our way in the darkness. Once we stumbled into a caravan of hobbled camels which champed and belched in the darkness, shifting their positions with nervous grunts.

We were on the south side of the village now and the going was slow. The palms thinned out and we were suddenly in soft sand. Here the desert had moved in on the *palmerie*, killing the trees and half burying them in steep dunes. We were a long time getting through the dunes, but at last we came out on to hard, flat desert and there, straight ahead of us, were the walls of the ruined *souk*.

After that, we had no difficulty in finding the *piste*. We struck away from it to the right, making straight for Kasbah Foum, taking our bearings from the shape of the mountains hunched against the stars. It seemed a long time before we saw the faint glimmer of light that marked the position of the camp. We made steadily towards it and gradually the light separated into two lights and we could see the shape of the bus and, beyond it, the tents.

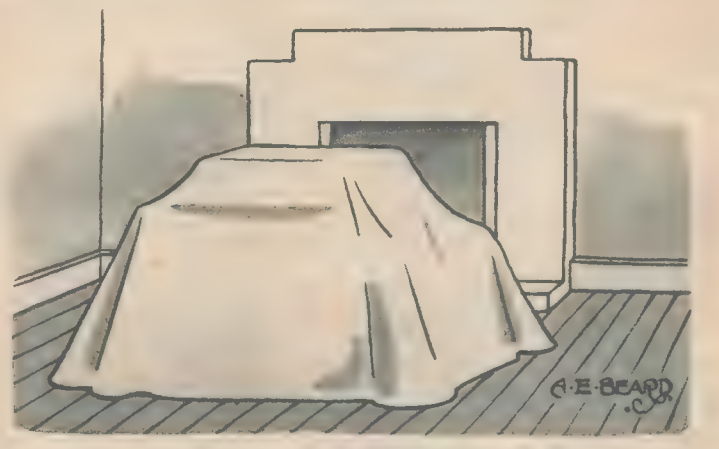
We couldn't have been more than two or three hundred yards away, when there was a yell that rose to a scream; high-pitched, sudden and frightening. It was cut off abruptly.

I checked at the sound of it, and in the same instant the headlights of the bus were switched on. They cut a great swathe through the desert night and figures leapt to view, a huddle of Berber men bending over something on the sand of the *piste*. They straightened up and stood like frozen figures caught in some fearful act that should have remained cloaked by the night.

The horn began to blare then, and they broke and ran. I was running, too, now. I shouted something—something in English. I caught a glimpse of White peering out of his tent. There was a stab of flame and the crack of a gun. Then he started to run. We were all running—running towards a still body that lay in a tight bundle on the *piste*.

To be continued next week

"I keep worrying about the dreadful mess this room will be in when we have the decorators—



—next week"

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LETTERS OF CONSEQUENCE

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SAYS VALERIE HOBSON

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THE EDGE OF SUICIDE

Continued from page 23

running commentary on the r/t and report the least sign of Dog Zebra slipping."

"All right, sir," Mulloy said. "It seems rather easy."

"On the contrary, you'll be directing the whole operation. Now, who'll take the other one?"

Braybrook said he'd do his best. Hawkins just sat and said nothing.

"That's fine. Now I'm planning to stay inside the aircraft and start up the outboard engines. I'm going to use one and four in reverse pitch as a brake to stop her moving forward."

Hawkins at last opened his mouth. "It's a crazy scheme." His voice sounded harsh and contemptuous.

Farrington said wearily: "It's the best scheme I can think of, Mr. Hawkins."

"How do you propose to cool the engines, Captain? On the ground, with no slipstream, and in reverse pitch, without even the fan effect of the propellers, Lord help the cylinder head temperatures!"

"I'm only going into reverse thrust when we are obviously just about to move. Even so, I know I may cook the leads."

"They'll catch fire, more likely. And the engines will probably seize into the bargain."

"There is that risk, Mr. Hawkins."

"But, sir," Clarke said. "You're not seriously thinking of staying inside the aircraft while the snow's thawing out? At the angle she's at, she's bound to go over the cliff."

"Sounds like suicide to me," Hawkins commented acidly.

"If the engines give signs that they might go, there's one other thing we can try. That's why I've got a gang of men with shovels. But I'm hoping the engines will hold her where she is till the bulldozers arrive."

Nobody said anything else. They collected their coats, and the five of them went out into the melting snow. The refuelling had already started. They could see torches glittering on Dog Zebra's silver wings. Hawkins said to Clarke: "I'll say one thing. He's got guts. If Dog Zebra goes, he'll go, too."

"Why should you worry? That'll be even better than you hoped for."

"I wouldn't say that, Nobby. I never said I wanted him to break his neck."

"Well, your conscience should be clear. I gather all you propose to do is to stand around and say, 'I told you so,' when Dog Zebra slips over the edge."

Hawkins didn't reply, and they trudged on in silence. When they reached the aircraft, the controller met them at the head of his gang with their shovels, and said, in a voice of doom: "The temperature's already forty degrees, Captain."

FARRINGTON told him what he proposed to do, and did not stop to listen to his comments. Clarke and Braybrook took over the tractors. As Farrington climbed into the aircraft, Mulloy called out, "All the best, sir," and Clarke and Braybrook echoed him.

Farrington said gruffly: "See you keep the tow-ropes as tight as you can. Once she really starts off, she'll be gone."

Just as he got into the cockpit through the emergency exit, another voice said, so gruffly it was difficult to distinguish the words: "Good luck, Skipper."

Farrington put on the earphones and established communication with Mulloy in the caravan. Then he sat down to wait.

It was very dark inside. There was a ghostly loneliness about the deserted flight-deck that added to the oppressive quiet of this watch on a broken aircraft. Every fifteen minutes he checked on the snow conditions outside, and whether Dog Zebra was showing any tendency to slide.

Two hours went by. Nothing seemed to change but the temperature. That was still going steadily upwards. Outside, Hawkins was finding the waiting difficult. He began to think about Farrington and what he, as the engineer, should do about the pilot's dangerous scheme. He recognized Farrington's quiet courage, and admired it in spite of himself.

The remembrance of his bitter words made him feel foolish and a little ashamed. With a feeling of surprise, he found that he was worrying, not about the aircraft, nor the inquiry, nor his old feud, but about Farrington's personal safety.

Hawkins had an old engineer's distrust of a pilot handling the engines. Of course, Farrington knew something about them, but for twenty years now engines had been like his own flesh and blood to Hawkins. And the Astroliner's three thousand-horsepower monsters had been his especial pride. Every little indication on a temperature gauge or the flicker of an oil pressure he could interpret almost as though the motors were talking to him. There were a dozen little tricks he had gained from experience of coaxing the best out of them.

Farrington's idea might be crazy. The engineer knew it was expecting too much from the engines. But if it was going to be done, he was the one best able to do it. A feeling of guilt came over him at ever allowing the pilot to try it alone.

He heard Mulloy reporting a temperature of twelve degrees above freezing. "The snow's getting very soft, sir. I think it might be as well to get the engines started."

"We'll give them another half hour," Farrington replied. "I don't want to start them till I have to."

INSIDE the aircraft, the captain's eyes wandered to the emergency hatch, open to the dark sky. It would take him a couple of seconds to reach it, probably a couple more to get his body through, even if he was quick. Too long, if Dog Zebra had already started sliding. He was tensed now, listening for the slightest creak from the fuselage.

Suddenly there was a scraping noise, and his heart leapt inside him. Then a pair of legs dangled through the hatch, followed by a large body in a dark blue greatcoat. Finally, Hawkins's thin face made an appearance.

"It's time to start the engines, Captain," he said.

Farrington looked up in surprise. "There's no need for the two of us, Mr. Hawkins."

"Please, sir." The engineer sounded as though he was actually appealing to him.

"I thought you didn't think much of my scheme."

"I still think it's asking too much of the engines, sir. But if it's going to be asked, I'd like to do the asking."

Farrington's face very nearly creased into a smile. Then he said: "If you really want to, I'll be glad of your help. You might be able to keep the cylinder head temperatures below maximum for me."

"Nobody outside heaven can do that, sir. But I'll do my best to prevent them blowing up on us."

He took over the panel and started the outboard engines. Farrington sat beside him.

"Seems a bit more cheerful, somehow, with the engines running," Hawkins said. "Even if we are going no place." Then, remembering the lake below them, he added fervently: "I hope, I hope, I hope."

He kept the propellers in normal pitch, idling revolutions with no forward thrust, and the temperatures remained a comfortable 130 degrees, well below the absolute maximum permitted by the makers. An hour went by quite peacefully, with Mulloy reporting no signs of slipping. The wind had increased to twenty knots, and the temperature outside was up to forty-six degrees.

"There's great puddles of water on the runway now, sir," Mulloy reported. "But she's still holding well."

Shortly after he spoke, a huge piece of snow crumbled from the nose and tumbled down the slope like a giant's snowball. Dog Zebra lurched as another white lump detached itself and

"I don't know whether I can make it tonight, Jim—it depends on how the big chair looks in the corner by the window"

exploded in a cloud of wet smoke against the starboard side of the aircraft.

"I'm putting them in reverse thrust, sir," Hawkins said. "Just in case."

He pushed the emergency plunger, and the note of the engines changed as the pitch was reversed. Hawkins opened wide the gills and the oil cooler shutters. The rev. counter showed only a thousand per minute. But the cylinder head temperatures were creeping up.

Mulloy reported: "She's completely unstuck from the snow. I think she may go any minute now. There's nothing holding her except the tractors. Their ropes are taut."

Twenty minutes later, there was a tremendous cracking sound, followed by the shriek of metal against ice. Inside the aircraft they felt a violent jerk as Dog Zebra started to move.

Hawkins opened up the engines immediately. Against four thousand horsepower of reverse thrust, Dog Zebra shuddered and stopped dead. Looking outside, Farrington could see a miniature storm in front of the nose, as the backward slipstream churned up the loose snow and sent it flying into the black air.

Mulloy called: "You slipped about a foot then, sir. Went very suddenly, didn't she? But the engines seem to be holding her all right now."

Hawkins's eyes were staring at the cylinder head temperatures, as though the little phosphorescent needles were hypnotizing him.

He said reluctantly: "I'll have to reduce power, sir." And he moved the levers gently away from him. His ears strained for the slightest sound of slipping. He stopped the throttle halfway down the reverse thrust range. Dog Zebra stayed where she was.

THE engines roared monotonously on for half an hour, holding the aircraft back from the lake. The two men sat in silence, watching the gauges. Hawkins turned his head and looked at the strain on the captain's face. He felt glad to be beside the man now. Farrington had left the manipulation of the engines entirely to his discretion. He had relied on him utterly to do what was best for both of them. The warmth of being trusted by another human being flowed into Hawkins's heart and gave him confidence and determination.

The pilot felt the engineer's eyes on his face and, looking up, saw the friendliness in them illuminated by the slight blue light from the instruments. Farrington smiled, and Hawkins, warmed still further by this slight contact inside the cold, broken machine, said: "We'll do it, sir. I know we'll do it. These engines are tough."

As he said the words, Dog Zebra started to slide forward rapidly. Hawkins put the throttles in full reverse thrust. Mulloy yelled through the radio: "The rope on one of the tractors has snapped, sir. Can you hold that power?"

"Cylinder head temperatures are way above maximum," Farrington replied.

"Then I think you should get out, sir, while you can. She's lurched forward about three feet. There's not much more to go before the sheer drop."

Farrington said: "Get the new rope on as quickly as you can, Mulloy. We're staying here."

"There's one thing, anyway," Hawkins said, almost cheerfully. "The temperatures will soon all be off the clocks. So we needn't bother to watch the gauges any more."

And by the time Mulloy reported the new rope in operation, every temperature gauge was hard over on its stop.

"I'll have to throttle back, sir. They'll seize solid in a minute."

Hawkins eased the engines back. Dog Zebra was rocking slightly. She creaked as though she was just about to slide. "We can't expect them to stand this for long, sir."

Farrington stared in silence at the panel. Then he called over the radio: "Mulloy, get the gang to dig away the snow under the inboard propellers so they'll be able to rotate, will you? And after that, put them on making a slipway behind the aircraft. See they make it as smooth and slippery as possible. We're going to try and slide back, using all four motors."

Mulloy's voice sounded doubtful and anxious as he acknowledged the order. But almost immediately they heard the clink of shovels around the fuselage.

Farrington explained to the engineer beside him: "I hadn't anticipated we'd have to use so much power just to hold her. This is the last-ditch idea I mentioned earlier. I didn't want to try it unless I had to. But now it's the only thing we've got left before we lose the engines. You'll be able to get the inboards into reverse, won't

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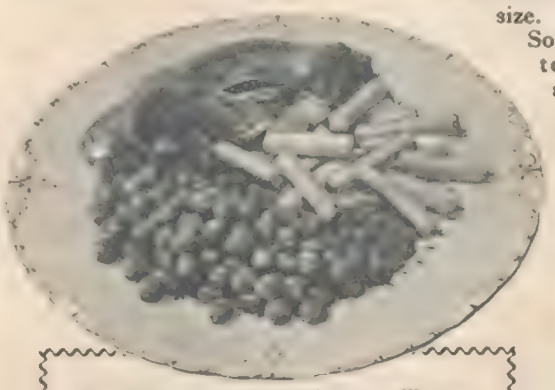

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you, even though the props are bent to hell?"

"I can do that, sir. The danger is, when we put a load on the damaged propellers, the tips may break off. Possibly the whole prop will spin away. After all, they've had a bit of a bashing!"

"And if they do come off, number three will foul up number four propeller. And number two will fly into the fuselage. That's what I was afraid of, myself."

"Number two will cut into the engineer's panel." Hawkins paused before adding: "And us, if we're still sitting here."

Farrington said quietly: "I know. But the aircraft's completely free from snow now. There's only fifty yards of slope uphill behind us, before the level runway starts. But we'll need every ounce of reverse power we can get hold of, to slide backwards up on to it. Are you willing to try?"

"With both tractors pulling all out, we might be able to manage it, sir. Anyway, I'm game to have a go."

It took half an hour's hard digging to make the slipway. When Mulloy informed Farrington it was completed, Hawkins started the two other engines. The vibration from the damaged propellers shook the whole fuselage, but they rotated successfully. As he put them into reverse pitch, the engineer screwed up his face.

"They're clanking like old tin cans," he said. Very cautiously, he moved all four throttles towards the full reverse thrust position. The aircraft jerked and shuddered as the propellers and tractors struggled to get her moving backwards. Hawkins was beyond worrying. A strange elation and excitement filled him as he listened, half expecting either the engines to blow up at any minute or a propeller blade to come hurtling through the fuselage. He held the throttles hard against the stops till the airscrews seemed to be screaming with rage.

"Here comes the big bang," he said to Farrington, and tried to smile.

But, instead, there was a fantastic creaking sound that shook all Dog Zebra's plates, and then a jolt that sent them both sprawling. The aircraft was moving backwards. Over the radio, Mulloy shouted excitedly: "She's sliding back beautifully. Keep it up, sir."

They felt the aircraft rumble, tilt back, and then start skidding at a rapidly increasing rate, as she left the slope and humped back on to the runway. The fuselage was screeching against soft snow and grit. Mulloy screamed: "Throttle back. You're catching the tractors up!"

Hawkins put the propellers into normal thrust, and Dog Zebra shivered to a standstill. He said to Farrington: "If you don't mind, sir, I'll close down the engines immediately."

Mulloy reported an awful lot of steam and smoke coming out of the motors, even when they were stopped.

"I'm not surprised," Hawkins said, a grin all over his face as the two of them scrambled out of the emergency exit. "The wonder is that they're still with us."

"The good old engines," Farrington said affectionately, watching them sizzling and snorting. "They did us proud. And Mr. Hawkins—thank you."

The captain put out his hand. Hawkins took it and wrung it warmly. "It was your idea, sir. Sounded crazy to me. But I'm damned glad it worked so well."

Clarke and Braybrook came over in great jubilation. "Thanks for manning the tractors," Farrington said to them and, when Mulloy joined them, he added: "You did a good job, Mr. Mulloy."

"Nothing to the job you put up, sir."

"It was Mr. Hawkins here who kept the engines going. He nursed them like children."

Hawkins kept his eyes on the ground. It was odd that such a tough, hard-bitten engineer with normally such a very loud mouth should suddenly find himself utterly at a loss for anything to say.

The maintenance crew arrived with their equipment at ten o'clock next morning, and by early evening Dog Zebra was ready to fly over to Gander for repairs and overhaul. Farrington taxied on to the end of the runway and gently moved the throttles half open. Dog Zebra grumbled a little, then moved forward slowly.

"Your throttles, Mr. Hawkins."

"My throttles, sir." The engineer officer advanced the levers to sixty-two inches manifold pressure. "Take-off power, Captain."

The aircraft wobbled, as though protesting against being back in harness once again. Then she seemed to recognize her old enemy, the waters of Gulf-range, just over the brow of the uneven runway. Gathering all her strength, she made a furious charge forward. The airframe lifted on to the oleo legs, and the wheels left the ground. With her engines sending out a steady and determined roar, Dog Zebra nosed up into the quiet air, and leapt over the lake.

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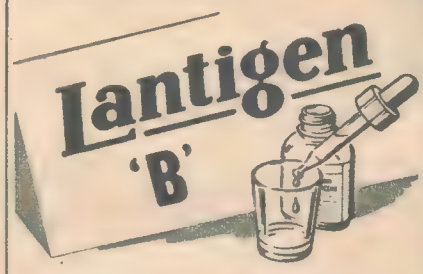

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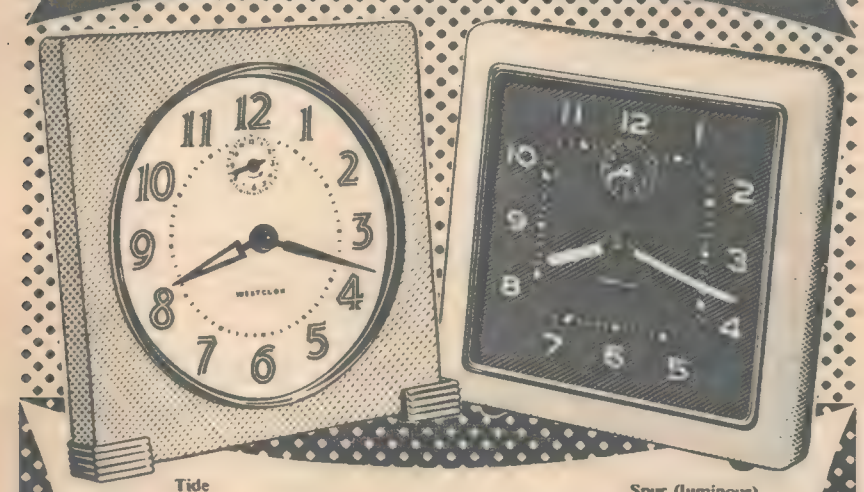

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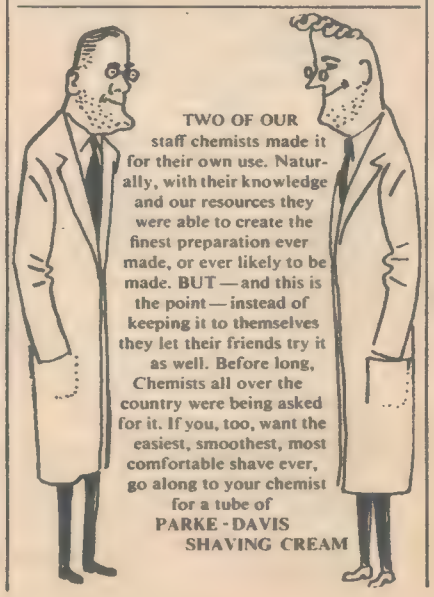

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A MAN IN THE HOUSE

Continued from page 9

spasm of fright, clumsy and startling, as she knelt by the bed. "Is something the matter, Spratchley? Aren't you well? What is it, Spratchley?"

A glaze of pain on Spratchley's eyes gave her another spasm of fright. She saw him try to heave himself upwards from the pillow. An asthmatical stutter for breath became a long choking wheeze, almost a whistle, excruciating as the scour of steel on glass.

She heard him try to say, "I can't, miss—I can't——" and then saw the under-whip of pain catch him unprepared, up through the lung, leaving him gasping.

It was Spratchley who said, when the doctor came: "Not the hospital, sir. Not the hospital. I don't want to go there. I don't want to go to that place, sir," but she felt that the words were really her own. In her fright she could not express them, and it was Miss Constance who echoed them aloud.

"Is it necessary, the hospital? He can be looked after here."

"Not quite in the same way."

"You heard him beg not to be taken," Miss Jackie said.

"That's a natural feeling everybody has."

"Yes, but must he really? Against his will? Does he have to? When we could look after him equally——"

"Pneumonia is always a long job," the doctor said. "With all your penicillin, it's still very tricky. You need persons with training. It can be very exhausting for persons like yourselves with no training. The only possible solution would be a nurse——"

"Then if that's the solution," Miss Constance said, "he must have a nurse."

"Very well," the doctor said. "We will try the nurse."

THERE had always been in the house a sort of casualness, a perfunctory ease of the kind that comes of long orthodox habit not broken by accident or affliction. The division of the labours of Spratchley did not require argument. It did not seem to demand the evidence of affections. It was perfectly simple as it was. Like Spratchley himself, it had long been taken for granted.

The nurse, Farrer, arrived with a discordancy of brass, driving her own car. The sisters had long given up a car as a luxury pointless to two people who had etched a plan of life with perfection between the walls of their garden. They did not call on people, a habit which, they discovered, had the satisfactory result of encouraging people, very largely, not to call on them. The few people who did call rang the old-fashioned spring bell at the front door and Spratchley, hurrying from any quarter of the world, however far away, always answered it.

Nurse Farrer rang the bell with muscular brevity and entered the house without waiting for an answer. She was already hanging up her coat in the cloakroom and was about to wash her hands in the basin there by the time Miss Jackie had grasped with confusion that she ought to be answering the bell.

Miss Jackie was aware of a tall, crisp, healthy woman in her forties, with sensational shoulders. Her flesh had a smooth and tightened surface that shone with waxy reflections, as if recently starched. Her voice crackled.

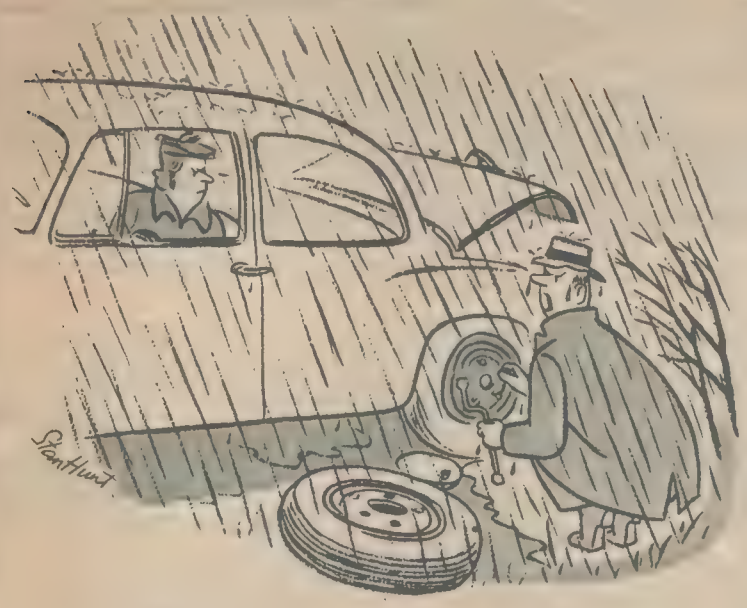
"Well, where are we? Where is our patient? Are we upstairs?"

"No, Nurse, downstairs. This way."

After Nurse Farrer had looked at Spratchley's small congested room in the silence of surprised disfavour, she went in and shut the door.

With sensations of unpleasant confusion, Miss Jackie waited outside. She was like a person unaccustomed to sickness who feels a sudden rush of nausea. The shutting of the door, the cutting off of Spratchley and the nurse, the long ominous silence: they were like rebukes she had done nothing to deserve.

No other emotion came out of the confusion of her nausea as she stood there numbly waiting for Nurse Farrer



"What do you mean, why didn't I think of this before we started?"

to reappear. She found herself going through the impotent and futile act of dryly washing her hands. Her sister had gone back to her room to dress, and slowly she began to be aware, without trying to explain it, that the house was strange with an enlarging emptiness.

Nurse Farrer reappeared with forearms crinkled with October gooseflesh.

"Is this the best room we can give this man? It's like an ice-box in there."

"It's his own room. It's the room he's always had."

"Well, I want him out of it. No patient of mine is staying in a room like that. Haven't we got something upstairs?"

"There's the west room. That's not used."

"Where's the kitchen? I shall want hot-water bottles. This man would have been better in hospital."

"He didn't want——"

"It isn't what they want. It's what's best for them. Is the room aired? We'd better have a fire in it."

With confusion, for the first time in her life, Miss Jackie laid a fire in the west bedroom. The loose branch of a plum tree banged against the window as she blew on the flames. She knew that any other morning that would have been a job for Spratchley: he up the ladder, she below in superintendence, giving directions until the branch was tied and nailed into place again. She could not bear untidiness in the appearance of her possessions.

Now there was nothing she could do about it except, perhaps, when she found a moment, see to it herself.

But the rattle of the branch in the chilly bedroom was a fresh source of emptiness that haunted her, and presently she rushed downstairs to fill hot-water bottles in a kitchen where Nurse Farrer was already making tea.

"All this lugging and carting would have been saved in hospital." With insensate blue eyes the nurse stood watching Miss Jackie fill the first of the hot-water bottles. A snarl of disfavour sprang from practical astonishment as she realized that Miss Jackie had probably never filled a bottle in her life. "What are you doing? You're creating a vacuum in that thing!—it will burst and scald somebody!"

Miss Jackie felt a slow, frigid settling in the complex whirlpool of her nausea. She felt the small beginnings of a withdrawal into retreat. A childlike sufferance of the dominance of Nurse Farrer, ordering her up and down stairs, kept her calm, without real thinking.

On the third of her journeys downstairs, to fetch the coal-scuttle, she saw Nurse Farrer appear with Spratchley, blanketed, in her arms. The thin body seemed almost to crackle as she clenched it to the starched front of her tunic.

As she began to go upstairs, a door opened on the first landing and Miss Constance, puffed and powdered, wearing a négligé of peach-pink with trimmings of soft white fur, prepared to come down. It had taken her, as always, a long time to dress. She had not moved through the stages of retreat into speechless sufferance that had affected Miss Jackie. She rounded the shining oak banisters with a flounce, the relieved, buoyant flourish of someone who had surmounted at last the tedious business of waking.

She was a third of the way downstairs before she was made aware, by a shout, of Nurse Farrer filling the whole width of the staircase with Spratchley. "I can't hold this man all day! For goodness' sake open that bedroom door!"

"The west room, Connie," Miss Jackie called. "The west——"

She saw her sister cling to the banisters for a second or two longer like a drugged cockatoo. Then she was running: not with agility or lightness, but on legs that seemed ridiculously to have grown leaden and inert, like those in dreams, under the foolishly flapping dress.

A second later Nurse Farrer swung into the bedroom with a Spratchley that Miss Constance thought stared past her emptily, eyeless with pain.

"And shut it—please. I can deal with this."

The faintness of nausea Miss Jackie felt was transferred some seconds later to the pale, dusty figure of her sister groping its way, without dignity, downstairs. Miss Jackie found herself following her into the kitchen. She had moved towards a second stage of sufferance that was defensive; she was aware of a strange chill, and then of her mind, in numbness, wrapping itself up.

"Does she stay? I mean does she live in?"

"I suppose so——"

"In that case she'll want a room. Shall we give her the box-room with the double bed?"

"I want a room near my patient." Nurse Farrer had come downstairs to fetch her black square nurse's bag. "What about the room next door? Is that in use?"

"That's the room where mother died. We don't use that."

"I want to be near this man—I want to hear if he calls."

With severe finality, she grasped her bag and went back upstairs before either of them could think of anything to say in answer. And on the landing, the firm, clenched snap of the west room door was all the answer they in turn were to get for the rest of the

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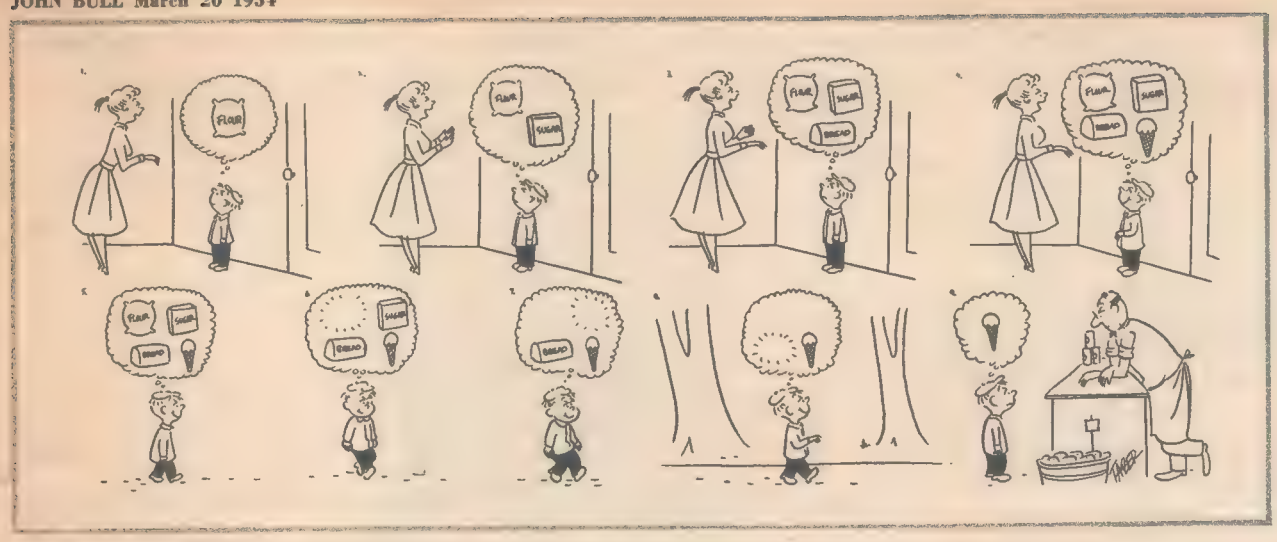

morning from her. The deadly sick-room silence filled the entire upper part of the house without a whisper.

It took them a long time to grasp that Spratchley was no longer theirs. At first it seemed merely that an iron wall of discipline had shut them away. They were estranged and unconsidered and unwanted in a house that had never known the affliction of a single disruption. They were suddenly the servants, waiting to be beckoned.

For the first few nights, Miss Jackie did not sleep well. She lay listening to a sound that troubled her and that she could not place for a long time: the loose plum branch knocking against the framework of Spratchley's window. Once she got up and put on her dressing-gown and stood at her own window, listening and looking out. Summer was still not over. In a quick westerly turn, the warmth of a sea-wind had blown across the countryside a softness in which she could still catch the fragrance of sheltered tobacco flowers under the wall below.

She stood staring into the darkness for a long time. She could not distinguish the frosted from the unfrosted flowers. She could not be quite sure of the days of Spratchley's illness. She remembered only a conversation with Nurse Farrer.

"No, I'm afraid you can't see him yet," Nurse Farrer had said. "In a day or two perhaps. But not yet."

In her ineptitude Miss Jackie could only ask: "When is the crisis?"

"There's no such thing as crisis nowadays. Penicillin and the sulphonamides have changed all that."

"I thought there was always a crisis."

"I'm afraid you're a little out of date," Nurse Farrer said.

As she leaned from the window breathing the unexpected rush of October warmth from the west, Miss Jackie fancied she could see the glow of a night-light from Spratchley's room. It was most strange about the night-lights. She had been to the village to fetch them herself. A grown man with a night-light—she wondered what small primeval fear of dark might have prompted that until Nurse Farrer said: "I prefer them to torches. I have had patients running a temperature through someone flashing a torch."

Since then Miss Jackie had been able to imagine the night-lights. She thought of them continually shining beside Spratchley's face in the dark. And because she could not reject the idea that only children needed lights against darkness, Spratchley became, in her mind, a child. He was afraid in his darkness, and she was frightened, too.

Some moments later she found herself standing on the landing outside her door. She had made up her mind to go to Spratchley and there was an enormous thumping in her chest. Then, before she could move another step, she heard the click of a door beyond Spratchley's room and a sharp question: "Who is there?"

"Only me. Going to the bathroom."

"Very well. Don't make a noise. Don't wake my patient."

Not till the following afternoon did she remember the plum branch. It made her heart begin thumping uncomfortably again as she remembered its shaking in the night.

She had hammer and nails in her trousers pocket and a ladder up against the west side of the house, under Spratchley's window, when Nurse Farrer appeared, rattling starchily, on the garden path.

"Whatever are you doing?"

Like a child, Miss Jackie explained about the plum branch.

"You can hear it all night. I can't sleep for it. I was going to tack it up."

"All right, but no hammering. Just tie it for now."

NURSE FARRER stood on the path, watching her climb the ladder. The plum branch was bruised to a sticky sandy-brown by its friction against the wall. High against the side of the house, Miss Jackie felt her legs turn to a cold and deadly wateriness, so that she was like something amorphous, not herself, floating in air. She seized the branch and bent it down, trying to tie it with fumbling hands.

Through the closed glass of the window she grew aware of shapes, but in her nausea and agitation they remained unresolved. They were mere knots of dark and light that might have been Spratchley's face, a pillow, an eider-down, a picture on a wall.

"I should have thought it would have been simpler to cut it off," Nurse Farrer said.

"They bleed if you cut them," she said stupidly.

At night she felt, for a long time, that she could not go upstairs. She put on a pair of old soft slippers and walked into the garden after her sister and Nurse Farrer had gone to bed. It was quiet and warm and the plum branch did not bang against the wall where the night-light showed.

As she walked up and down the damp lawn, she was aware of her own sense of crisis. She kept stopping to look up at the light, expecting to see it going out. Suddenly the hatred that had simply been latent inside herself spewed up like a new form of sickness. Its violence seemed to turn her round and push her back into the house. She was not even aware of her slippers, wet from the dampness of the lawn. She kicked them off unconsciously at the foot of the stairs. Then she began to climb up, and on the thick carpet she walked with long pauses, perhaps a minute to each step, clenching her hands.

When she finally opened the door to Spratchley's room, her mind was clear enough for her to remember that the handle was capable of being turned both ways, and she pulled on it slightly and turned it slowly inwards; and then, in the same way, slowly, after a long time, she shut it behind her and turned it back.

In the small glow of the night-light she saw Spratchley's eyes open in the bed. His breath came in a slow bubbling stutter.

"Spratchley," she said.

"Miss."

"Don't talk."

"Where have you been, miss?" he said. His words were half-coherent gasps in a fight for breath.

"Don't talk. She'll hear you. She wouldn't let us see you, Spratchley." She felt under the coverlet and found his hands. "You're cold, Spratchley, you're terribly cold."

"All the time I been cold, miss. All the time."

"Don't talk. I've got to go now. I just came——"

"Don't go, miss," he said. She felt a frightened, sinewy tightening of his hands, refusing to let go her own. "Stay here with me. I don't feel I got no friends——"

"Of course you've got friends, Spratchley. We're your friends."

A sudden rush of compassion filled her body with profound vibration. She moved her position so that she was half-sitting on the bed. She heard Spratchley trying to speak again. But this time the voice was so low that she could hardly hear it, and she bent her head to the pillow so that she could catch the whisper.

For some time she let her head remain on the pillow. She was imprisoned in her movements by the fact that Spratchley was holding her hands. Then presently her neck stiffened and she knew that there was no way of easing it except to lie with him on the bed.

She lay with him on the bed for a long time before she realized how cold she was. She watched the night-light and listened to the occasional stir of rising air against the plum branch which she had failed to tie securely against the wall.

In her coldness she moved uneasily and Spratchley said: "Don't go miss. Don't go away."

"It's all right, Spratchley. I'm not going. Don't worry. I'm here."

Her compassion grew to a state of wonder that was like a fine suspense. When she could not bear it any longer, she drew her cold legs up to her body and then curled them down again, into the bed. Then slowly she slid her stiffened shoulders under the sheets, into the warmth where Spratchley lay.

"I'm here. Don't worry," she said. She lay close to him, quiet in the bed, her body warming, not realizing for some time that he was not listening any longer.

IN the morning, the grief of Miss Constance took the form of hatred in which she lost all her puffy and flouncy calm, clawing at Nurse Farrer with sagging and vicious lips on which she had forgotten to put her rouge:

"I think it's perfectly scandalous the way you have behaved in this house. I call it perfectly scandalous. You treated everybody as if they were dirt. Especially Spratchley. He belonged to us—he had always been with us—he had been with us all these years. And you treated us as if we had no right to him at all."

But Miss Jackie had no hatred; she had nothing to say. She roamed abruptly about the garden, among her passions. Emptily beating her hands, she could think of nothing but the night-light, the plum branch and the way she had lain in the warmth of the bed.

THE END

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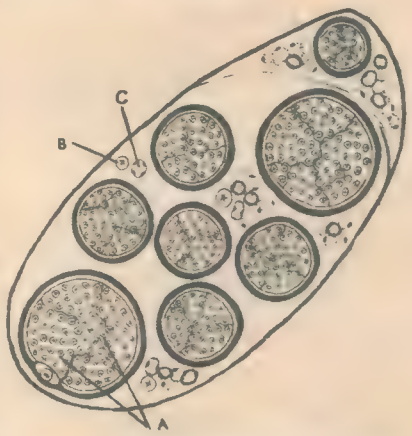
FACTS ABOUT YOUR NERVES

How 'NERVES' make us physically 'RUN DOWN'

ALTHOUGH when we become 'run down' it is usually physical exhaustion we mainly notice, the source of the trouble is very often in our 'nerves'. It is believed that our 'nerves', at some stage or other, influence the body and bring about certain physical changes which produce the intense fatigue, and other physical symptoms, that attack us when we are 'run down'.



Section of nerve trunk showing how nerve fibres run in bundles contained in sheaths. (A) Nerve Fibres. (B) Artery. (C) Vein.

Watch for these symptoms

You can usually recognise when your system is becoming 'run down' by your lack of energy, increasing tiredness, loss of interest in your job, poor concentration, insomnia and irritability, and by a growing feeling of deep mental and physical exhaustion. Whenever you notice these signs the proper thing to do is to put yourself on a course of Sanatogen.

The Sanatogen treatment

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How you take Sanatogen

Sanatogen is a very fine powder. You take it, mixed with a little water or milk, three times a day, with or between meals. Remember, it may have taken months for your body to get into a 'run down' state. Obviously, this cannot be remedied just overnight and it is important that you take Sanatogen regularly for at least eight weeks. Each day Sanatogen will put back into your body a little more strength, a little more vitality, rebuilding your system and restoring your energies. So when you start Sanatogen, make sure you get the full benefit from it by taking the complete eight-week course.

DOCTORS' OPINIONS

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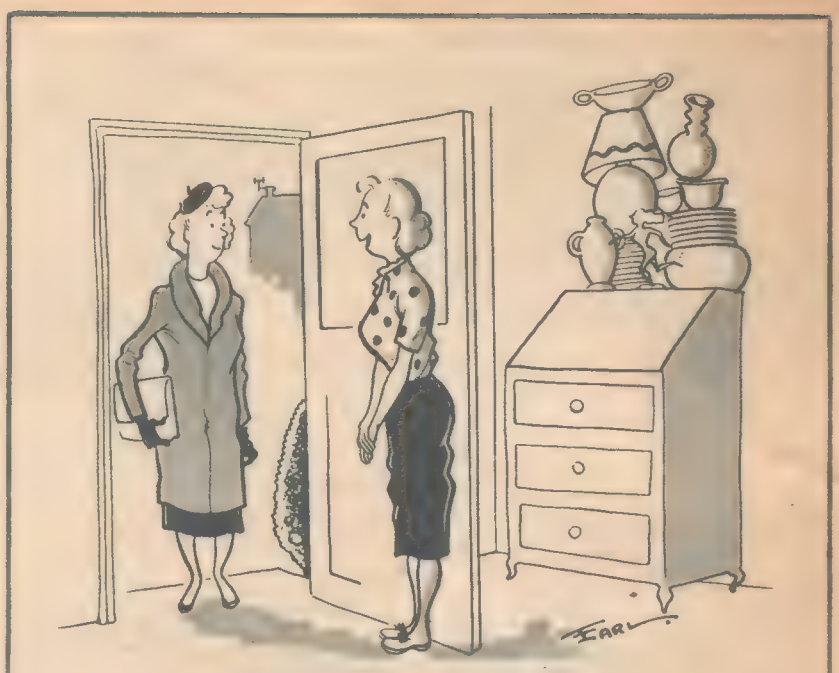

"Well, well, I was expecting you to bring that dear little boy of yours"

GAY ADVENTURE

Continued from page 17

civilian passenger boat was shortly to leave for America. There were passages available for me and my wife; if we failed to take them, the American Consul would no longer hold himself responsible for our safety. I had to make up my mind immediately.

It was a frightening decision to have to make. On the one hand, I had my ties in this country. On the other, I valued my American citizenship, and unless I returned fairly soon I was in danger of losing it. Sarah's position was quite clear. She was Winston Churchill's daughter and her departure might be misinterpreted both in this country and abroad. Nevertheless, as my wife, she would come with me.

The night before I had to make my decision, I was on a variety bill at the Holborn Empire. Sarah was with me, and that night the blitz was particularly heavy. When we left, the bombs were still falling but, instead of making for shelter, almost a hundred of the audience had gathered outside the stage-door to see us off.

I was just following Sarah into the car when a little old man pushed his way forward and grasped my hand. "Good luck, Vic," he said.

"Good luck yourself," I replied.

The old man stood there, still holding my hand. "I just want you to know how much we appreciate your staying here instead of going back to America," he said.

Next morning, I told the American Consul I would stay in this country and risk losing my citizenship.

In January, 1941, we felt the need for a weekend place in the country where we could rest from the blitz. For a fortnight, Mr. Churchill lent us the cottage which he had built with his own hands in the grounds of Chartwell.

Became Gentleman Farmer

A week or two later, through the good offices of Brendan Bracken, we rented a cottage on James de Rothschild's Waddesdon estate near Aylesbury. It was a delightful place, in a large park, with not a house in sight. We had a beautiful garden, a tennis court and various outbuildings. We kept hens and ducks, two cows and a goat which a farm-manager looked after. I prided myself on becoming a gentleman farmer and joined the National Farmers' Union.

At this time, Sarah and I frequently visited Mr. and Mrs. Churchill at Chequers and often, in the long winter evenings, they would huddle round the one coal fire in the bleak entrance hall and listen while I played the piano.

Although Mr. Churchill never gave us news before it was announced, we could always tell from his expression whether things were going well and, on these occasions, I would play his favourite songs like "A Bicycle Made For Two," "Lily Of Laguna" and most of all Eddie Cantor's song from the film *Whoopee*, which he insisted on my playing over and over again. Often, he would sing the words in a hoarse, off-key voice.

One night in 1941, he came down from his study looking inexpressibly grim. We guessed that yet another disaster had occurred, though we knew it was no use asking him what it was. Mrs. Churchill quietly poured him a glass of port and, thinking it would relieve the tension, suggested I play something on the piano.

"Stop!" Roared Churchill

Feeling that a popular song would be out of place, I decided on Beethoven's "Appassionata Sonata." I had played only a few bars when Mr. Churchill rose to his feet and thundered: "Stop!" We were all surprised, for it was the first time he had raised his voice to me.

"Nobody plays the Dead March in my house," he said.

We all laughed. "It's not the Dead March," I said, "It's the 'Appassionata Sonata.'"

Mr. Churchill glowered. He was notoriously unmusical. "You can say what you like," he said. "I know it's the Dead March."

I turned back to the piano. "But surely, sir, you can tell the difference between this . . ." and I struck a few chords of the Appassionata, "and . . ."

Before I had time to finish, Mr. Churchill thundered again: "Stop it! Stop it! I want no Dead March, I tell you."

Sarah rushed over to the piano and told me to play his favourite song instead. I did so and the moment passed. Next day, it was announced that H.M.S. Hood had been sunk with heavy loss of life.

When *Black Velvet* came to an end, I appeared with Sarah in Noël Coward's plays with music and played in music hall. I also made a film with Sarah, *He Found A Star*.

With my radio, theatre and cabaret work, I was convinced that I was contributing as much as I could to the war effort: I was making people laugh. With Sarah, it was different. She had not yet reached the heights in show business and she felt that, as the Prime Minister's daughter, she should be doing something more relevant than repertory and an occasional film. At the end of 1942, she joined the Waaf as an A.C.W.2.

Inevitably, we drifted farther apart. She was rarely stationed near home, leaves were infrequent and I was

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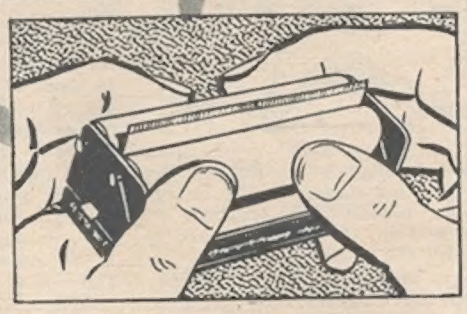

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usually too busy with my own work to travel hundreds of miles to see her.

Towards the end of 1942, I had two days free and arranged to stay in Morecambe, where she was then stationed. On the morning of the first day, I sent my chauffeur, Frank Cox, to London on his motor-cycle and sidecar. He was to collect the car from a garage, return to our cottage and from there drive me up to Morecambe. At noon, there was no sign of him.

Chafing at the waste of time, I took a train into London and inquired at the garage. Cox had not shown up, but the car was ready and, to save further time, I collected it myself and drove to Morecambe. I had been with Sarah exactly an hour when the phone rang. I was informed that Cox had been involved in an accident and was in hospital at Hemel Hempstead.

Now I was—and still am—very fond of Frank Cox. I first engaged him when he was a fourteen-year-old page at the Savoy, because I liked his cockney wit. Even now, I calculate that thirty per cent of my jokes originate in some remark of his. At the same time, I had made a journey of more than two hundred miles to see my wife.

Made Vital Journey

I rang up the hospital to see how ill he really was. He was on the danger list. "And would my presence improve his chances?" I asked the doctor. "Certainly," he replied.

Sarah agreed that I had only one course of action. I packed my bags and drove straight back to London. After many months, Cox recovered. The relationship between Sarah and myself, however, gradually deteriorated.

There was no definite break, no disloyalty on either side. I have mentioned how tension was caused by our differing attitudes to show business and, even today, I firmly believe that a marriage between two people in show business is almost bound to fail. Jealousy and the fact that both partners have to tour in different places

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

blight it from the start. After she joined the Waaf, Sarah and I saw less and less of each other. Finally, we stopped seeing each other altogether. We decided that there must be a clean break, and in February, 1946, she obtained a divorce on the grounds of desertion.

In late 1942, George Black gave me the lead in a new musical called *Get A Load Of This*, which pushed the idea of audience participation to even greater extremes than *Black Velvet*.

The main stage, jutting right out into the auditorium, was arranged as a night-club, with the cast appearing as guests drinking at small tables. The various sketches were then acted on a second stage built high at the back of the main stage. During the interval, we followed the pattern of *Black Velvet* in allowing the cast to mingle with the audience.

In 1943, my agent, Henry Sherek, joined up, and Harry Foster agreed to represent me from then on. I found, however, that I also needed a personal manager who could arrange my charity appearances, and I advertised in the press.

One of the people who answered was an attractive blonde named Natalie Conder, who had been recently invalided out of the A.T.S. "I don't want money," she insisted at the interview. "I just want to do something to help the war effort." I engaged her immediately.

By 1946, Miss Conder had become responsible for arranging almost the whole of my work. We had become fond of each other and, as we already spent most of our working day together, there seemed no reason why we should not make it a life partnership. On October 11, 1946, we married at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

Soon afterwards, I asked June Mainwaring, a talented young singer I had discovered the year before, if she would consider becoming my unofficially adopted daughter. She agreed, and both her mother and Natalie gave their consent. Later, June changed her surname to Oliver by deed-poll and appeared with me in several shows. In May, 1953, however, she decided that show business would not give her full satisfaction in life, and married.

Debt To Churchills

One of the reasons for the success of my present marriage is the fact that my former marriage never intrudes. Both my wife and myself regard it as an unsuccessful experiment in living on the part of two sincere people who, in spite of their best efforts, failed to get on with each other.

For myself, I am still deeply conscious of the immense debt I owe to the Churchills. During the war, Mr. Churchill used his influence with the United States authorities to ensure that my American citizenship was not forfeited because I had elected to share this country's misfortunes.

When I applied for British citizenship in 1946, I believe that it was again his influence which enabled my application to be granted quickly.

Henceforth, however, it was my wife Natalie who was to share my postwar success in a new type of programme, both on radio and television, and as conductor of the British Concert Orchestra.

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KALGOORLIE'S GOLD-DIGGERS LIVE DOWN THEIR PAST

Continued from page 20

well known for their skill and acumen discovered a source of gold in a former camel paddock at Coolgardie, a mining town near Kalgoorlie.

"They dug eight feet," says Wood, "and then, deciding the prospects weren't likely to be good, they gave it up. Later, two more prospectors tried their luck in the same shaft. After digging another two feet they struck unpromising colours, but pig-headedly decided to go on. At fifteen feet, they struck a bonanza." One of the richest strikes in recent years, the camel paddock produced about £32,000 worth of gold.

Gold was first discovered on the site of Kalgoorlie on June 15, 1893, by an Irish immigrant called Patrick Hannan. On June 17, Hannan applied in the nearby town of Coolgardie for a prospecting claim. In a week, more than 1,400 people were seeking gold in the Kalgoorlie area.

Pension For Pioneer

The prospectors who first staked claims on the Golden Mile were soon persuaded to sell out by tempting offers from the big mining companies—offers which bore no relation to the true worth of the find. Before his death in 1925 at the age of eighty-three, Hannan lived on a government pension of £150 a year. For a time, the town that grew up around his discovery was known as Hannans, but when it was declared a municipality in 1895, the aborigine name of Kalgoorlie was adopted. Hannan is now commemorated by a famous statue, an hotel, various sporting clubs and a local brand of beer.

Kalgoorlie itself has grown and shrunk with the booms and slumps in the gold business. After reaching a peak in 1915, production slumped in the later war years and the twenties. It revived when the oil flotation process was introduced in the early thirties, and reached a peak again in 1940. During the war, the industry had a low priority. Though production is climbing again, Kalgoorlie has not yet fully recovered.

As a town, Kalgoorlie, which has a population of 13,000, is still trying to live down its Gold Rush reputation as a hard-drinking city of sin. This attempt has been largely successful. There are fine buildings of brick and stone, hundred-foot avenues radiant with the delicate blue of the jacaranda blossom and a modern swimming-pool built to Olympic specifications. But somehow, the shops and hotels with their ornate wooden balconies suggest a frontier town, and though the police recently started to enforce the hitherto-ignored licensing laws, illegal betting shops are tolerated.

New Golden Mile Sought

At the moment, Kalgoorlie is anxiously awaiting the success of a project which might double its prosperity. Acting on the best geological and geophysical advice available, the Western Mining Corporation is prospecting for nothing less than another Golden Mile.

"We're very happy with the results of our drilling," says Frank Espie, deputy managing director of Western Mining. "It's confirmed exactly what the geologists and geophysicists predicted. In fact, we've found everything that goes with gold but the ore itself. But even if we find another Golden Mile, it may be too deep to work or otherwise outside our compass."

Meanwhile, Kalgoorlie applies itself stolidly to the business of producing gold. No one worries what happens to it once it is sold through the banks to the Australian Mint. A little of it may return to Kalgoorlie in the form of ornaments or fillings for teeth, but the bulk of it is hoarded away.

"It's a funny thing," says one old miner. "We go to all this trouble finding the stuff, digging out the ore and refining it, but what happens to it? They put it all back into the earth again—at Fort Knox." THE END

FIRST HUGE HOLIDAY OFFER of 1954—PRIZES value over £1,200!

GIANT FIRST PRIZE

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Celebrate In The Sun!

WIN this week's £750-plus-cruise First and you will be invited to enjoy with a companion a glorious cruise to sunny Portugal and colourful North Africa. A first-class outside cabin in the *Arcadia* awaits you—she sails on Saturday, July 3, for Lisbon and Casablanca, returning to Southampton on July 11.

Hundreds More Opportunities!

THAT coupon below also puts you in the running for 1,569 other must-be-won prizes—they include these cheques: £50, £25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, *two* of £5 and *ten* of £2 10s. Also waiting for winners are *fifty* "Season Ticket" prizes (each worth 10s.), followed by 1,500 "Good Shots," each with novel £5 opportunity. There is, too, £100 *extra cash* in which you can share—see coupon!

Golden Guide

THIS is your one last opportunity to receive a Presentation Copy of *Bullets Golden Guide* for 1954. This handy, concise book is already helping hundreds of readers to win in *Bullets*—and there is a copy waiting for you as a free and post-free gift if you use, as directed, your Gift Label below.

NEARING Australia on her maiden voyage is the £6,000,000 liner "Arcadia," seen above. You can sail in her this summer, with a companion, to celebrate winning this week's £750 cheque for a "Bullet." Many "Bullets" winners have already enjoyed holiday cruises in P. & O. liners, including Mr. A. W. Davis and his wife (Christchurch, Hants), seen on right when ashore at Madeira last year.

CROSSWORD No. 870

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Thief. 5, Pub. 6, Blinder. 8, Lag or Log. 11, Pal. 12, Night. 13, Toll. 14, Coat. 15, Rush. DOWN: 2, Foil. 3, Mains. 4, Power. 5, Poll. 7, Ramble. 9, Eats or Rats. 10, Cooks.

£100 OUTRIGHT WINNER: C. Mapletoft, 16 Manvers Street, Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts.

Awards value £25 shared by 14 entrants, each of whom receives 5-lb. Surrey Fowl in addition. "Signpost" Prizes to 2nd Runners-up.

NOTE.—JOHN BULL'S Crossword offers ended with No. 872; entry vouchers issued for Crosswords remain valid for *Bullets*.

ANOTHER HUGE OFFER NEXT WEEK!

CHIEF WINNERS—"BULLETS" No. 1,924

FIRST PRIZE, £750: Miss P. Thomas, 124 Broad Street, Barry, Glam:

What's To Follow—Doesn't "Greedy" World *Care*?

£50: A. G. Faulkner, 168 Cowick Street, Exeter: LIFE IN THE SLUMS—BEHIND "LIFER" ON "MOOR"?

£25: W. Hammond, 43 South Avenue, Southend-on-Sea: FIDDLING WITH THE CAR—MAKES DAD'S *Weekend* GO!

OTHER AWARDS: £10: R. Radcliffe, 72 Alexandra Street, Ashton-under-Lyne: WORK FOR BRITAIN AND—"CORN" EARNED—CORNER TURNED. £9: A. Derrick, 19 Hadrian Close, Sea Mills, Bristol: BURIED AND FORGOTTEN—IN "GROUND" *Given*—GRIEVANCES. £8: C. E. J. Lee, 55 Dryden Street, Swindon: THE DEVIL'S CAULDRON—WILL MCCARTHY'S "WITCH-HUNT" OVERTURN? £7: J. Jackson, 9 Salisbury Street, Hadfield, Manchester: MAN TO FOLLOW—BOOKIE—RIGHT INTO *Bank*! £6: W. Whitaker, 65 Conway Road, Treorchy, Glam: THE DEVIL'S NET—LIFE'S "ROUGH SEA" *Helps*. £5: H: High, 51 Edilom Road, Manchester: IF IT'S NOT DONE—"ON ICE," SOMEBODY'S "SLIPPING"! £5: A. Richards, 26 West Park Road, Newport, Mon: FIDDLING WITH THE IDEA — HE'S ANOTHER MENUHIN, NEIGHBOUR!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. 50 Surprise Awards and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

HOW TO WIN £750 and CRUISE

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Britain's Business	Overflowing
Seeds Of Peace	No Pleasure Cruise
Give Fritz A Gun And	In A Cloud Of Confetti
The Power Of Money	Marched Off
White Man's Magic	Trying To Be Funny
What Spring Does	Awful Muck
The Silent Service	May Go Up
When All Seemed Lost	Room To Expand
Fully Employed	Guided Missile
Call Of The Countryside	Hot Under The Collar

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

After All The.....	With ..... Inside
Dying For A.....	Farewell To .....
The McCarthy	.....Of The West

£125,000 GUIDE TO "BULLETS" SUCCESS

SIMPLY make an entry of FOUR or more *Bullets* (with correct fee, see Rules), for this week's Cash-plus-Cruise Prize. Address and enclose Gift Label with your entry—and you will receive FREE and POST-FREE the 64-page Golden Guide, packed with practical help for would-be winners.

FINAL WEEK TO USE THIS FREE GIFT LABEL

To secure my Golden Guide FREE, I enclose with this Gift Label my entry of FOUR or more *Bullets* for Contest No. 1,929.

Name .....

Address .....

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in "*Bullets*" *Bulletin* dated April 17 and in JOHN BULL dated April 24), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, April 10, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,929 result.)

ADDRESS ENTRY: "Bullets" 1,929, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

EXAMPLE ..... 6d.

BULLET

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

£100 BONUS An extra £100 cash will be shared amongst the 70 chief winners whose successful *Bullet* was one of four or more for Contest No. 1,929.

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. value... . No..... 1,929 Closing Postmark MON., MAR. 29

Signed.....

Address .....

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STICK 2½d. STAMP here for "*Bulletin*"

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

EXTRA THREE FOR 1s. ONLY

This extra three-effort coupon is valid only if enclosed with the fully completed coupon above for Contest No. 1,929.

Signed.....

Address.....

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NEXT WEEK — GRAND 1,001-in-1 PRIZE OFFER

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2 level teaspoons of cream of tartar.

Line a pie plate or flan ring with the pastry. Bake in hot oven (375°F. Mark 5). Mix together the Nestlé's Milk, lemon juice and rind, cream of tartar with the egg yolks. Pour this mixture into the baked pie shell. Prepare a meringue by beating up the egg whites until stiff. Fold in 1½ oz. castor sugar. Pile this on top of the lemon mixture and sprinkle with rest of the sugar. Bake in a slow oven (200°F. Mark 1.) until crisp to the touch.

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